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**SITTING DAYS—2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>9, 10, 11, 12, 23, 24, 25, 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>12, 13, 14, 25, 26, 27, 28</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>9, 10, 11, 12, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
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FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—SEVENTH PERIOD

Governor-General
His Excellency General the Hon. Sir Peter Cosgrove AK, MC (Retd)

House of Representatives Office holders
Speaker—Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith
Deputy Speaker—Hon. Bruce Craig Scott MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP
Members of the Speaker’s Panel—Mr Russell Evan Broadbent MP,
Ms Anna Elizabeth Burke MP, Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP,
Hon John Kenneth Cobb MP, Mr Patrick Martin Conroy MP,
Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Mrs Natasha Louise Griggs MP,
Ms Sarah Moya Henderson MP, Mr Stephen James Irons MP,
Mr Craig Kelly MP, Ms Michelle Leanne Landry MP, Ms Clare Ellen O’Neil, MP,
Mrs Jane Prentice MP, Ms Melissa Lee Price MP,
Dr Andrew John Southcott MP, Mr Michael Sukkar MP,
Mr Ross Xavier Vasta MP, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth Wicks MP

Leader of the House—Hon. Christopher Pyne MP
Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Luke Hartsuyker MP
Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Anthony Stephen Burke MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP

Party Leaders and Whips
Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Malcolm Bligh Turnbull MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
Chief Government Whip—Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP
Government Whips—Mr Ewen Thomas Jones MP and Mr Brett David Whiteley MP

The Nationals
Leader—Hon. Warren Errol Truss MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Barnaby Thomas Gerard Joyce MP
Chief Whip—Mr Mark Maclean Coulton MP
Deputy Whip—Mr George Robert Christensen MP

Australian Labor Party
Leader—Hon. William Richard Shorten MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Tanya Joan Plibersek MP
Chief Opposition Whip—Mr Christopher Patrick Hayes MP
Opposition Whips—Ms Jill Griffiths Hall MP and Ms Joanne Catherine Ryan MP

Printed by authority of the House of Representatives
### Members of the House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbott, Hon Anthony John</td>
<td>Warringah, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albanese, Hon Anthony Norman</td>
<td>Grayndler, NSW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexander, Mr John Gilbert OAM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrews, Mrs Karen Lesley</td>
<td>McPherson, QLD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bandt, Mr Adam Paul</td>
<td>Melbourne, VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Billson, Hon Bruce Fredrick</td>
<td>Dunkley, VIC</td>
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<td>Mackellar, NSW</td>
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<td>Mayo, SA</td>
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<td>Broad, Mr Andrew John</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broadbent, Mr Russell Evan</td>
<td>McMillan, VIC</td>
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<td>Brodtmann, Ms Gai Marie</td>
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<td>Fisher, QLD</td>
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<td>Chisholm, VIC</td>
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<td>Gippsland, VIC</td>
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<td>Chesters, Ms Lisa Marie</td>
<td>Bendigo, VIC</td>
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<td>Dawson, QLD</td>
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<td>Blaxland, NSW</td>
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<td>Parkes, NSW</td>
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<td>Melbourne Ports, VIC</td>
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<td>Dreyfus, Hon Mark Alfred QC</td>
<td>Isaacs, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Dickson, QLD</td>
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<td>Richmond, NSW</td>
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<td>Adelaide, SA</td>
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<td>Leichhardt, QLD</td>
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<td>Feeney, Hon David</td>
<td>Batman, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Werriwa, NSW</td>
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<td>Hunter, NSW</td>
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<td>Frydenberg, Hon Joshua Anthony</td>
<td>Kooyong, VIC</td>
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<td>Gambaro, Hon Teresa</td>
<td>Brisbane, QLD</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Members of the House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giles, Mr Andrew James</td>
<td>Scullin, VIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gillespie, Dr David Arthur</td>
<td>Lyne, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<td>Moore, WA</td>
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<td>Griggs, Mrs Natasha Louise</td>
<td>Solomon, NT</td>
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<td>Shortland, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Hartsuyker, Hon Luke</td>
<td>Cowper, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hastie, Mr Andrew</td>
<td>Canning, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Hawke, Mr Alexander George</td>
<td>Mitchell, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hayes, Mr Christopher Patrick</td>
<td>Fowler, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henderson, Ms Sarah Moya</td>
<td>Corangamite, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Hendy, Dr Peter William</td>
<td>Eden-Monaro, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hockley, Hon Joseph Benedict</td>
<td>North Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hogan, Mr Kevin John</td>
<td>Page, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howarth, Mr Luke Ronald</td>
<td>Petrie, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hunt, Hon Gregory Andrew</td>
<td>Flinders, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Husic, Hon Edham Nurreddin</td>
<td>Chifley, NSW</td>
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<td>Lyons, TAS</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irons, Mr Stephen James</td>
<td>Swan, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Jensen, Dr Dennis Geoffrey</td>
<td>Tangney, WA</td>
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<td>Herbert, QLD</td>
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<td>Jones, Mr Stephen Patrick</td>
<td>Throsby, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Joyce, Hon. Barnaby Thomas Gerard</td>
<td>New England, NSW</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<td>Katter, Hon. Robert Carl</td>
<td>Kennedy, QLD</td>
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<td>Keenan, Hon. Michael</td>
<td>Stirling, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelly, Mr Craig</td>
<td>Hughes, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>King, Hon. Catherine Fiona</td>
<td>Ballarat, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Laming, Mr Andrew</td>
<td>Bowman, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landry, Ms Michelle Leanne</td>
<td>Capricornia, QLD</td>
<td>NATS</td>
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<td>Laundy, Mr Craig</td>
<td>Reid, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Fraser, ACT</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Farrer, NSW</td>
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<td>Groom, QLD</td>
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<td>Jagajaga, VIC</td>
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<td>Perth, WA</td>
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<td>Forrest, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Macquarie, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Corio, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Matheson, Mr Russell Glenn</td>
<td>Macarthur, NSW</td>
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<td>Riverina, NSW</td>
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<td>Indi, VIC</td>
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<td>McEwen, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Morrison, Hon. Scott John</td>
<td>Cook, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Blair, QLD</td>
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<td>Gorton, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members</td>
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<td>Party</td>
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<tr>
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<td>O'Dowd, Mr Kenneth Desmond</td>
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<td>NATS</td>
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<td>Higgins, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>O'Neil, Ms Clare Ellen</td>
<td>Hotham, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owens, Ms Julie</td>
<td>Parramatta, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palmer, Mr Clive Frederick</td>
<td>Fairfax QLD</td>
<td>PUP</td>
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<td>Fremantle, WA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pasin, Mr Antony</td>
<td>Barker, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perrett, Mr Graham Douglas</td>
<td>Moreton, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pitt, Mr Keith John</td>
<td>Hinkler, QLD</td>
<td>NATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plibersek, Hon. Tanya Joan</td>
<td>Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Porter, Hon. Charles Christian</td>
<td>Pearce, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prentice, Mrs Jane</td>
<td>Ryan, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price, Ms Melissa Lee</td>
<td>Durack, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pyne, Hon. Christopher Maurice</td>
<td>Sturt, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Grey, SA</td>
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<td>Oxley, QLD</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Kingston, SA</td>
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<td>Fadden, QLD</td>
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<td>Greenway, NSW</td>
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<td>Longman, QLD</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Berowra, NSW</td>
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<td>Lalor, VIC</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Maranoa, QLD</td>
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<td>Scott, Ms Fiona Meryl</td>
<td>Lindsay, NSW</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
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<td>Cowan, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<td>Gilmore, NSW</td>
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<td>Taylor, Mr Angus James</td>
<td>Hume, NSW</td>
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<td>Gellibrand, VIC</td>
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<td>Wicks, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth</td>
<td>Robertson, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
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</table>
## Members of the House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Division</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilkie, Mr Andrew Damien</td>
<td>Denison, TAS</td>
<td>IND.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Williams, Mr Matthew</td>
<td>Hindmarsh, SA</td>
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<td>Wilson, Mr Richard James</td>
<td>O'Connor, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
<td>La Trobe, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyatt, Mr Kenneth George AM</td>
<td>Hasluck, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
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</table>

**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**


### Heads of Parliamentary Departments

Clerk of the Senate—R Laing
Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder
Acting Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—D Heriot
Parliamentary Budget Officer—P Bowen
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Minister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>Senator Hon Nigel Scullion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service</td>
<td>Senator Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Digital Government</td>
<td>Senator Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter Terrorism</td>
<td>Senator Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>Senator Hon Michael Keenan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>Senator Hon James McGrath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Productivity</td>
<td>Hon Dr Peter Hendy MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator Hon Scott Ryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development</td>
<td>Hon Warren Truss MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy Prime Minister)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Resources, Energy and Northern Australia</td>
<td>Hon Josh Frydenberg MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects</td>
<td>Hon Paul Fletcher MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</td>
<td>Hon Michael McCormack MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>Hon Julie Bishop MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for International Development and the Pacific</td>
<td>Hon Andrew Robb AO MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Tourism and International Education</td>
<td>Hon Steven Ciobo MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>Senator Hon Richard Colbeck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Vice-President of the Executive Council)</td>
<td>Senator Hon George Brandis QC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Leader of the Government in the Senate)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Justice</td>
<td>Hon Michael Keenan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>Senator Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Small Business</td>
<td>Hon Scott Morrison MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon Kelly O’Dwyer MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon Kelly O’Dwyer MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Finance</td>
<td>Hon Alex Hawke MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deputy Leader of Government in the Senate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Minister of State</td>
<td>Senator Hon Mathias Cormann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</td>
<td>Hon Barnaby Joyce MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</td>
<td>Senator Hon Anne Ruston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Leader of the House)</td>
<td>Senator Hon Christopher Pyne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Resources, Energy and Northern Australia</td>
<td>Hon Josh Frydenberg MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Science</td>
<td>Hon Karen Andrews MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Innovation</td>
<td>Hon Wyatt Roy MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Minister</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</strong></td>
<td>Hon Peter Dutton MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>Senator Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for the Environment</strong></td>
<td>Hon Greg Hunt MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Cities and the Built Environment</td>
<td>Hon Jamie Briggs MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Health</strong></td>
<td>Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Health</td>
<td>Hon. Ken Wyatt MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Sport</strong></td>
<td>Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Rural Health</td>
<td>Senator Hon Fiona Nash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Defence</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon Marise Payne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Veterans’ Affairs</td>
<td>Hon Stuart Robert MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</em></td>
<td><em>Hon Stuart Robert MP</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Materiel and Science</td>
<td>Hon Mal Brough MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
<td><em>Hon Darren Chester MP</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Communications</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon Mitch Fifield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for the Arts</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon Mitch Fifield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Manager of Government Business in the Senate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Employment</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Social Services</strong></td>
<td>Hon Christian Porter MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Human Services</td>
<td>Hon Stuart Robert MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs</td>
<td>Senator Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Education and Training</strong></td>
<td>Senator Hon Simon Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Vocational Education and Skills</td>
<td>Hon Luke Hartsuyker MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deputy Leader of the House)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Tourism and International Education</td>
<td>Senator Hon Richard Colbeck</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each box represents a portfolio. Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type. As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. However, there is a Department of Human Services in the Social Services portfolio and a Department of Veterans’ Affairs in the Defence portfolio. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a minister in all cases. Assistant Ministers in italics are designated as Parliamentary Secretaries under the Ministers of State Act 1952.
## Shadow Ministry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Shadow Minister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader of the Opposition</strong></td>
<td>Hon Bill Shorten MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader for Science</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Kim Carr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader on State and Territory Relations</td>
<td>Senator Katy Gallagher*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager of Opposition Business (Senate)</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator Michael Danby MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon Ed Husic MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary Assisting with Digital Innovation and Startups</td>
<td>Senator Sam Dastyari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Manager of Opposition Business (Senate)</td>
<td>Terri Butler M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon Tanya Plibersek MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development</td>
<td>Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Penny Wong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Defence</strong></td>
<td>Hon David Feeney MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td>Gai Brodtmann MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport</strong></td>
<td>Hon Anthony Albanese MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Cities</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Northern Australia</td>
<td>Hon Gary Gray AO MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Regional Development and Local Government</td>
<td>Hon Julie Collins MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>Hon Alannah MacTiernan MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Western Australia</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>Hon Chris Bowen MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Small Business</td>
<td>Michelle Rowland MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Productivity</td>
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<td><strong>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Shadow Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>Hon Ed Husic MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Industry</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Lisa Singh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Vocational Education</td>
<td>Hon Sharon Bird MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Higher Education</td>
<td>Hon Amanda Rishworth MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Manufacturing</td>
<td>Nick Champion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Communications</td>
<td>Hon Jason Clare MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Attorney General</td>
<td>Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for the Arts</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon David Feeney MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Hon Kate Ellis MP</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Julie Owens MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for School Education and Youth</td>
<td>Senator Sam Dastyari</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</td>
<td>Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Resources</td>
<td>Hon Gary Gray AO MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Health</td>
<td>Hon Catherine King MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Ageing</td>
<td>Hon Shayne Neumann MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Mental Health</td>
<td>Senator Katy Gallagher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Sport</td>
<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Health</td>
<td>Stephen Jones MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Tony Zappia MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Aged Care</td>
<td>Senator Helen Polley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Families and Payments</td>
<td>Hon Jenny Macklin MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Disability Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness</td>
<td>Senator Katy Gallagher*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Human Services</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Doug Cameron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Carers</td>
<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
</tr>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Families and Payments</td>
<td>Senator Carol Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Child Safety and Prevention of Family Violence</td>
<td>Terri Butler MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</td>
<td>Hon Richard Marles MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multiculturalism</td>
<td>Michelle Rowland MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration</td>
<td>Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shadow Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.

* Senator Katy Gallagher’s appointment to the Shadow Ministry is effective from 1 November 2015. Senator the Hon Jan McLucas will serve as Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness and Shadow Minister for Mental Health, and represent the Shadow Minister for Northern Australia, the Shadow Minister for Health, the Shadow Assistant Minister for Health, the Shadow Minister for Sport and the Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs in the Senate until 31 October 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>SHADOW MINISTER</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>Hon Shayne Neumann MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>Hon Warren Snowdon MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
<td>Hon Brendan O’Connor MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Employment Services</td>
<td>Hon Julie Collins MP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

x
## CONTENTS

### TUESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2015

**Chamber**

**COMMITTEES**—
- Membership ................................................................. 10961
- Appointment ................................................................. 10961
- Joint Select Committee on Trade and Investment Growth—
  Appointment ................................................................. 10961

**BILLS**—
- Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015—
  Second Reading ............................................................. 10962

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**—
- Workplace Relations ....................................................... 10982
- Death Penalty ............................................................... 10983
- Chambers, Councillor Don, OAM ........................................ 10983
- Schools: Music ............................................................... 10984
- Workplace Relations ....................................................... 10984
- National Carers Week ...................................................... 10984
- Workplace Relations ....................................................... 10985
- Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development 10985
- Workplace Relations ....................................................... 10986
- National Carers Week ...................................................... 10986
- Workplace Relations ....................................................... 10986
- Victoria: Traffic Congestion ............................................. 10987
- Workplace Relations ....................................................... 10987
- Hume Electorate: SPYfest Goulburn .................................... 10988
- Workplace Relations ....................................................... 10988
- Road Infrastructure ......................................................... 10989
- Workplace Relations ....................................................... 10989
- North Queensland Cowboys ............................................. 10989
- Workplace Relations ....................................................... 10990
- Uganda: Yotkom Medical Centre ........................................ 10990

**SHADOW MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS** .................................. 10990

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**—
- Trade with China ........................................................... 10993
- National Security ........................................................... 10994
- Trade with China ........................................................... 10994
- Trade ............................................................................. 10996
- Budget ........................................................................... 10997
- Health ............................................................................. 10998

**DISTINGUISHED VISITORS** ..................................................... 10999

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**—
- Budget ........................................................................... 10999
- Economy ........................................................................ 11000
- Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement ................................. 11001
CONTENTS—continued

Economy ........................................................................................................ 11002
Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement............................................................... 11003
Superannuation............................................................................................. 11004
 Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement............................................................... 11004
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS..................................................................... 11005
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE—
 Water .............................................................................................................. 11005
 Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement............................................................... 11006
 Economy ....................................................................................................... 11007
 Infrastructure: Pacific Highway ................................................................. 11008
 Workplace Relations ..................................................................................... 11009
 Taxation.......................................................................................................... 11010
 Workplace Relations ..................................................................................... 11010
 Mental Health................................................................................................. 11011
 Paid Parental Leave......................................................................................... 11012
 Telecommunications..................................................................................... 11013
PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS..................................................................... 11014
DOCUMENTS—
 Presentation.................................................................................................. 11015
MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE—
 Higher Education .......................................................................................... 11015
COMMITTEES—
 Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights—
 Report............................................................................................................. 11029
BILLS—
 Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015—
 Second Reading.............................................................................................. 11030
BUSINESS—
 Rearrangement............................................................................................. 11047
COMMITTEES—
 Membership................................................................................................. 11053
BILLS—
 Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015—
 Second Reading.............................................................................................. 11053
COMMITTEES—
 Joint Select Committee on Trade and Investment Growth—
 Appointment.................................................................................................. 11085
BILLS—
 Social Security Legislation Amendment (Further Strengthening Job Seeker
 Compliance) Bill 2015—
 Second Reading.............................................................................................. 11085
ADJOURNMENT—
 McEwen Electorate: Solar Energy ................................................................. 11093
 McEwen Electorate: Road Safety ................................................................. 11093
 Queensland: Electricity Prices ........................................................................ 11094
 Iraq and Syria................................................................................................ 11096
CONTENTS—continued

Life Sciences Queensland: Globally Engaging Network Event .............................................. 11097
Mental Health .......................................................................................................................... 11098
Northern Australia .................................................................................................................. 11100
NOTICES ............................................................................................................................... 11101

Questions In Writing

Wildlife Conservation: Swift Parrot—(Question No. 829) ....................................................... 11105
Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Staff Contracts—
  (Question No. 856) .................................................................................................................. 11105
Department of Finance: Staff Contracts—(Question No. 866) ................................................. 11107
Department of Finance: Casual Staff Contracts—(Question No. 884) ................................. 11107
Department of Finance: Contracted Services Payments—(Question No. 902) ................. 11108
Department of Finance: Market Research—(Question No. 991) ........................................ 11108
Department of Finance: Office Equipment—(Question No. 1028) ....................................... 11108
Department of Finance: Legal Services and Credit Cards—(Question No. 1046) .............. 11109
Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Mobiles Phones and Tablets—
  (Question No. 1054) ............................................................................................................. 11109
Department of Finance: Mobile Phones and Tablets—(Question No. 1064) ...................... 11109
Department of Finance: Departmental Staff Redundancies—(Question No. 1134) .......... 11110
Department of Finance: Departmental Staff Lost and Stolen Equipment—
  (Question No. 1186) ............................................................................................................. 11110
Department of Finance: Ministerial Staff Lost and Stolen Equipment—
  (Question No. 1217) ............................................................................................................ 11110
Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Departmental Staff Training—
  (Question No. 1280) ............................................................................................................. 11111
Department of Finance: Departmental Staff Training—(Question No. 1290) ................. 11111
Department of the Environment: Departmental Media Events—
  (Question No. 1320) ............................................................................................................. 11111
Department of Finance: Ministerial Staff Training—(Question No. 1321) ....................... 11112
Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Ministerial Media Events—
  (Question No. 1359) ............................................................................................................. 11112
Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Ministerial Conferences—
  (Question No. 1411) ............................................................................................................. 11112
Department of Finance: Departmental Hospitality—(Question No. 1446) ...................... 11113
Department of Finance: Ministerial Hospitality—(Question No. 1477) ......................... 11113
The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 12:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

COMMITTEES

Membership

The SPEAKER (12:01): I have received a message from the Senate informing the House of the appointment of senators to certain joint committees. As the list is a lengthy one, I do not propose to read the list to the House. Details will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

Appointment

Mr BROUGH (Fisher—Minister for Defence Materiel and Science and Special Minister of State) (12:01): On behalf of the Leader of the House I move:

That:

(1) all members of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications be discharged from the committee;
(2) standing order 215(a) be amended to read as follows:
   (a) the following general purpose standing committees shall be appointed:
      (i) Standing Committee on Agriculture and Industry;
      (ii) Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts;
      (iii) Standing Committee on Economics;
      (iv) Standing Committee on Education and Employment;
      (v) Standing Committee on the Environment;
      (vi) Standing Committee on Health;
      (vii) Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs;
      (viii) Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities;
      (ix) Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs; and
      (x) Standing Committee on Tax and Revenue; and
(3) the Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts and the Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities have the power to consider and make use of the evidence and records of the former Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications and to continue any inquiries of that committee, as relevant.

Question agreed to.

Joint Select Committee on Trade and Investment Growth

Appointment

Mr BROUGH (Fisher—Minister for Defence Materiel and Science and Special Minister of State) (12:02): On behalf of the Leader of the House, I move:

That:

(1) paragraph 2 of the resolution of appointment of the Joint Select Committee on Trade and Investment Growth be amended, as follows:
"(2) That the committee deliver its first report and recommendations to the Parliament on or before 15 October 2015, and following presentation of this report, the committee:

(a) consider any relevant issues as may be referred to it by either House of the Parliament or a Minister; and

(b) continue its work until the House of Representatives is dissolved or expires by effluxion of time.”;

and

(2) a message be sent to the Senate acquainting it of this resolution and seeking its concurrence.

Question agreed to.

BILLS

Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

to which the following amendment was moved:

That all words after "That" be omitted with a view to substituting the following words:

"the House:

(1) notes the evidence given before the Senate inquiry into this bill to the effect that senior officials from the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development advised Mr Bill Milby of North Star Cruises that for his company to compete in Australia under this proposed legislation, he should reflog to a foreign State, sack his Australian crew and hire a crew on cheap foreign wages;

(2) accordingly declines to give the bill a second reading; and

(3) expresses its support for regulation aimed at revitalising the Australian shipping industry by ensuring that:

(a) the Australian shipping industry operates on a level playing field with foreign ships, based on Australian standards, when working in Australia; and

(b) Australia's vital economic, environmental and national security interests in fostering a local shipping industry are safeguarded".

Mr RAMSEY (Grey) (12:03): As I was saying last night, the BCA estimate there are 90,000 manufacturing jobs in Australia relying on coastal shipping—jobs in cement, oil refining, steel and aluminium—relying on a service costing more than double that which our international competitors face. As I said, when these industries fail—when they go offshore—then not only do the manufacturing jobs go but so do the shipping jobs, and the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Let us have a look at what has been happening: there was a 63 per cent reduction in deadweight tonnage on the Australian register in the two years following the Labor government legislation; the number of ships in this category fell from 30 to 15 during the period of the Labor government; the number of ships on Australian transitional licences halved in that time; and, most tellingly, shipping's share of the total Australian freight has fallen from 27 per cent to 17 per cent since the turn of the century. What a disaster.

In the rest of the world, sea freight is seen as the most efficient way to shift commodities over large distances—and so it should be in Australia. We have large distances. One of the great challenges of this nation is the distances between our production and consumption
markets. And, largely, Australians live on the coast—we live near the biggest freight-line in the world; it is called the sea. You do not have to fix up the rail; you do not have to grade the roads; all you have to do is put boats on it. It should be the most efficient way to ship freight, but in Australia it is not; that is because we have priced ourselves out of the game.

As I said earlier on, I do not actually think it is because Australian workers are overpaid; it is because a workplace has been engineered where their performance is way below what is acceptable on a world standing, and their unions and their companies need to sit down together and get a more efficient outcome. We are more likely to get that if there is some competitive pressure placed upon both those unions and the companies that employ the workers, because in fact they are operating a closed shop—the companies themselves—and it is their customers that are paying the price. And, as I said, the price is the jobs of their workers. I commend the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (12:05): Like those on our side of the House, I too rise to oppose the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and support the amendments that were made by the member for Grayndler. This legislation that is before the House at the moment seeks to make a substantial review of the Australian coastal shipping industry. On 25 June, the coalition brought into the House reforms to establish a single permit system. The granting of this will allow international shipping to be able to access our coastal trade for periods of 12 months. They will be able to do that and they will be able to compete with Australian based traders. But this will give them unfettered access to Australian ports to be able to ply their trade.

This bill also seeks not only to deregulate Australian domestic shipping by removing a preference for Australian flagged vessels that are crewed by Australian operators but also to exempt foreign vessels from paying Australian wages and from observing Australian industrial and other safety regulations. You have just heard people on the other side say that this was not about wages and, in fact, they do not think Australians are overpaid, yet they are going to introduce into this system something that allows foreign vessels to come in, pay foreign seamen at a fraction of Australian wages and not observe Australian safety standards, and they say that is a level playing field for competition. About what else are going to say that? I am sure they would not talk that way when they talk about their farm blocks or the businesses that they seek to protect; only when they are talking about Australian workers applying themselves on the maritime coastal trade of this country. It is okay for any country to come in and compete—any third-world country, anyone who wants to bring in a ship that is not necessarily going to be of the same standard of maintenance as an Australian vessel. ‘That is okay. You can come in. You can compete for those jobs in Australian ports. You can compete to apply yourself on the Australian coastal trade.’ They are effectively going to dismantle an Australian shipping industry as a consequence.

They say this is all about enhancing trade and our economy. It is going to put a lot of people out of work. It is going to make it difficult for a lot of people who study to become maritime workers, whether they are officers on ships, deck hands or whatever. That will be a category of workers that is obsolete in this country. Currently, under the Coastal Trading (Revitalising Australian Shipping) Act—which was introduced, by the way, by a Labor government in 2012—there is a three-tiered licensing system that essentially requires people seeking to move freight by sea to give a preference, where possible, to Australian based
When an Australian vessel is not available, a foreign vessel can operate in Australian waters on a temporary licence. Under this approach, Australian maritime operators are effectively given the first right of refusal. Interestingly, when a foreign vessel operator does get a temporary licence, they are required to pay their crew at Australian rates of pay. They are also required to observe all Australian regulations and safety conditions. In other words, it maintains a level playing field when operating on Australian coastal routes. It does not give a competitive advantage to foreign flagged vessels by being able to undercut the domestic maritime industry by paying foreign workers less and by not observing Australian workplace conditions and standards.

The coastal trading act was part of a broader reform that was aimed at revitalising the Australian shipping industry. The objective of the act was to provide a regulatory framework for coastal trading in Australia which contributes to the broader Australian economy, enhances the efficiency and reliability of Australian shipping and maximises the use of Australian vessels registered under the Australian General Shipping Register. Bear in mind, the shipping industry was in a serious state of decline under the last Liberal government. Under John Howard, the number of Australian flagged vessels working the domestic coastal trade of this country plummeted from 55 vessels in 1996, when the Howard government took office, to 21 vessels in 2007. It fell to Labor to review the industry and to propose reforms based on economic, environmental and security interests. The eventual reforms were made in accordance with the unanimous recommendations of the 2008 parliamentary inquiry, within which the then National, Paul Neville, played a substantial part, and I credit him for the role that he took as the former member for Hinkler. I hope the current member for Hinkler looked at the words used by Paul Neville in looking at protecting Australian jobs.

It also followed substantial consultations that took place between 2010 and 2012, immediately prior to the bill being introduced into this House. The Liberal government has once again launched an attack on Australian workers by seeking to repeal the 2012 coastal trading laws by again undercutting Australian shipping by putting thousands of Australian jobs at risk, if not destroying the industry itself. If this legislation is passed, the inevitable result will be the closure of Australian businesses that own and operate Australian ships, as a consequence of unfair trading from foreign flagged vessels. We are going to contract out to other nations the ability to operate our coastal run. We will become dependent on someone else to do our work under this legislation. When a ship flies an Australian flag, not only is it subject to Australian standards of safety, environmental compliance and taxation but it also must comply with our industrial relations laws, whether the ship is operating on only our coastal run or internationally as well.

However, under the coalition's official modelling of the legislation before the House, we will see significant exemptions provided to foreign vessels on Australian coastal trading, including the application of an exemption from paying Australian domestic wage structures. What we will see as a consequence of these proposals is the removal of Australian workplace standards on foreign vessels. We will see the sacking of Australian workers who work not only on Australian vessels but also on foreign vessels, because they will not have to be paid Australian wages. Australian jobs will have gone. It will also impact on those in this country.
who are on temporary work visas. They too will be paid Third World rates of pay in Australian waters.

This entirely defeats the purpose of securing a local maritime skills base for Australia, because in the future there will no longer be an industry for Australians to work in. I understand that our shipping industry currently employs around 10,000 workers, whether directly or indirectly. As a consequence of this legislation at least 2,000 direct maritime jobs will go, and I am not sure how many more thousands will indirectly follow as a result of terminating this Australian industry.

As we all know, Australia currently has the highest unemployment rate since the global financial crisis. We are sitting at about 7.9 per cent. Interestingly, unemployment has increased two per cent since this government came to office. Just as they did with respect to Australian manufacturing, and just as they did with respect to goading Holden to leave manufacturing in Australia, followed by Ford, just as they chased those industries out they are now chasing out the Australia maritime industry.

If anything, the government's current policies and reforms should be aimed at boosting Australia's economic and security interests, while providing opportunities for Australian job seekers. However, these proposed reforms we have before us today do nothing about that. I have to say that they are not terribly shy about how these reforms will come about, because they have gone out of their way to tell Australian industry how to get around this. They made it very clear to an Australian operator, Mr Milby, who for many years has operated North Star Cruises, which is located in the Kimberley region of northern Western Australia. He was somewhat concerned about what it would mean to allow foreign vessels to come in and undercut his business and put him out of business. He got advice from the government. Do you know what it was? They advised Mr Milby that the best way to remain competitive under these changes was to register his vessel overseas, get rid of his Australian crew and hire foreign workers on lower rates of pay. That is great advice from an Australian government: telling an Australian owned and operated business how you can be competitive under these changes by sacking your Australian workers. If they call that reform, when it comes to hard decisions how could anyone trust what they do?

We have seen what they proposed with Work Choices. They made it legal, for the very first time in Australian history, to pay people below the award rate of pay. And they thought that was a workplace reform. The only people who were affected by that were the people who were dependent on their wages—they were price-takers. They were the low-paid workers; the people on minimum rates of pay. They couldn't say, 'If you don't pay me I am going to go to another job.' They were the price-takers of our economy. They had to take whatever was offered. They were the workers whom these people, when they were last in power, sought to penalise.

We are seeing the same thing played out now with their talk about penalty rates. They think it is all fair and that penalty rates may be a thing of the past and we should be changing our views about them. None of the people here live on penalty rates. None of the people here need to balance their home budget on penalty rates. But I will tell you that there are plenty of people in my electorate who do.

It is just not sound that we again attack an Australian industry. Given our coastline, given the points of trade into our community, given the points of security for our island based
nation, it is just not fundamentally so that we go out and dismantle an Australian industry that services our nation. We are going to replace that with domestic coastal shipping being provided by foreign vessels flagged under a foreign power. We have a chink in the armour of our sovereignty and in being able to look after ourselves. We are going to contract that out to somebody else.

I support the amendments by the member for Grayndler and I am very much opposed to what has been put to the House in this legislation. I encourage the government to rethink their position.

Mr Pitt (Hinkler) (12:20): It is always a great pleasure to follow the member for Fowler, a very generous supporter of my predecessor, Mr Neville. I thank him for his words of support. I rise to speak in support of the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The bill will help to make the Australian shipping industry more competitive and efficient. I note the comments of the member for Fowler on Mr Neville's previous involvement in previous committees, but the reality is very straightforward. The legislation that was put forward by Labor, and enacted, simply has not worked. In fact, it has had the opposite effect, as we have had large decreases in Australian coastal shipping. I am a common sense person and a practical person. If things do not work you need to make changes. That is the harsh reality of the world.

This government is committed to ensuring Australia is open for business, so that we can grow our economy and create jobs. That is why we have signed free trade agreements with China, Japan, and South Korea. The Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement, the biggest global trade deal in 20 years, will improve Australian trade across the 12 countries that make up 40 per cent of the global economy. The full benefits of these agreements will be reached only if we have the networks and services to support trade. Global connectivity is key to creating opportunities. As an island nation, shipping is essential to Australia's prosperity.

For too long, companies wanting to move goods or passengers by sea have had to deal with a complex and burdensome licensing systems. The reforms contained in this bill will help reduce the burden on business, open up new opportunities and unlock the potential of our coastal trading routes. Under the previous Labor government, the fleet of major Australian registered ships—over 2,000 tonnes dead weight—with coastal licences was in sharp decline. They have plummeted from 30 vessels in 2006-07 to just 15 in 2014. As I said, the proof is in the pudding when it comes to the reality of the changes that Labor made previously. There has been a sharp reduction in Australian vessels; we need to act and we need to make these changes. Between 2000 and 2012, while the volume of freight across Australia actually grew by 57 per cent, shipping's share of the Australian freight task fell from about 27 per cent to just under 17 per cent. That is a massive reduction. Between 2010 and 2030, Australia's overall freight task is expected to grow by 80 per cent, but coastal shipping is only forecast to increase by 15 per cent. It is the great ocean highway. It is an opportunity for us to reduce road and significant other areas of transport. Over the first two years of the former government's coastal trading act, there was a 63 per cent decline in the carrying capacity of the major Australian coastal trading fleet.

As explained by the Deputy Prime Minister in his second reading speech, evidence shows that Labor's legislation increased the price of coastal shipping services but failed to improve the quality and availability of those services. Bell Bay Aluminium reported a 63 per cent
increase in shipping freight costs from Tasmania to Queensland in just the first year of the 2012 regime—from $18.20 a tonne in 2011 to $29.70 a tonne in 2012. As someone who comes from a business background, I can say that you cannot sustain those types of increases. A 63 per cent increase in freight costs in just one year is simply unsustainable and it costs Australian jobs. It is absolutely alarming that it is cheaper to ship sugar from Thailand to Australia than it is to ship Australian sugar around our own coastline. As someone who has been involved with the sugar industry since the age of five, I know that this is an absolutely diabolical outcome for Australian growers, Australian millers and all the people associated with sugar. Across the Queensland coast, there are major sugar storage facilities which rely on shipping.

In my electorate of Hinkler, in the city of Bundaberg, the sleeping giant for our economy is the Bundaberg port. There are enormous opportunities for us to grow and diversify our local economy. The Bundaberg port has real opportunity in the future. We have had announcements from companies such as Knauf, an international plasterboard manufacturing company, that it will build a $70 million manufacturing plant at the Bundaberg port, subject to a few conditions. One of those is the supply of gas. This is unusual, I am sure, but I congratulate the new Labor state government on recognising how important that infrastructure is and maintaining the previous state government's commitment—because, without that gas pipeline, this project would not go ahead. It will create 200 to 300 jobs in construction and around 65 full-time positions and add some two per cent to the local GDP. That is an enormous addition to our local economy. The Bundaberg port has just started to export sand, which is a new opportunity for a local producer, and, of course, with the new gas line I am sure other businesses out there will be attracted to the port facility for opportunities for manufacturing.

But sugar is Queensland's largest agricultural crop by volume and value. With 80 per cent of Australia's sugar exported overseas, it is also Australia's seventh largest agricultural export. Australia's sugar exports were worth $1.4 billion in the financial year before last, making us the third largest supplier in the world. I congratulate Minister Robb on signing the TPP. Whilst our growers have not been glowing in their endorsement, they recognise that it is a significant improvement on our current access to the US market. I have spoken to my local growers, they are satisfied that we have done everything we could and I congratulate the minister on his work. This industry also employs 50,000 people, and nearly all of those are located in regional centres and regional areas—not just the farmers but the people who supply machinery and provide fertiliser and all of the add-on services. It is an incredibly large and important industry for the Queensland economy. Thousands of people in my electorate are reliant on the sugar industry to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table for their kids. It is an industry which has been around for over 100 years and, I hope, will continue strongly into the future.

When it comes to coastal shipping and this bill, we need to act now. Without change, shipping will not be able to deliver the internationally competitive and efficient services that Australian businesses and farmers desperately need. The main focus of the bill is a greatly simplified permit system that will reduce costs to business and enhance access to competitive international shipping services.
While we talk about those opportunities, I would also like to speak about the opportunity for a submarine maintenance base at the Bundaberg port. This is something which has been put forward for consideration by the Defence white paper, which I am sure will be released soon. I encourage the new defence minister to look at this opportunity. It certainly stacks up. It has been assessed by people who have considerable experience in defence. It is a location where it is actually cheap to live. There is lots of housing, there is plenty of available land and the local facilities are second to none. There is a real opportunity to put that base in Bundaberg.

We are simplifying the rules for moving cargo, simply because we must. Labor's laws have failed—as I have explained in this speech today, they have simply failed. If we do not take action, there will be even less coastal shipping for Australian flagged ships. Australia's rigorous maritime safety and environmental laws will continue to apply to all ships operating in Australian waters. The bill also has built-in protections for Australian workers. This is a brief contribution, but thank you for the opportunity, Mr Speaker. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (12:28): I rise to speak on the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. It is a blatant and brutal attack on Australia's workers. In some countries religion, in some countries language and in some countries culture divides the major political parties. In Australia, it is always industrial relations. Since the Labor Party was formed, those parties which call themselves conservatives or liberals have constantly attacked workers and their representatives. This piece of legislation is yet another blatant and brutal attack on the Australian workforce and their representatives. It threatens 10,000 jobs and endangers the Australian shipping industry, an industry which is absolutely vital for Australia's economic, environmental and security interests. It abandons Labor's reforms to revitalise the Australian shipping industry before these reforms had time to work and puts nothing in their place. It deregulates the Australian shipping industry and removes preference for Australian flagged and crewed ships to operate around our coast. It permits foreign flagged ships to work Australian waters for longer periods before their workforce is subject to Australian law—the Fair Work Act wage and conditions standards. I will repeat that: it basically permits foreign flagged ships to work in Australian waters for longer periods before their workforce is subject to Australian law in relation to wage and conditions standards.

The legislation is nothing more than the Liberal government's latest attempt to float Work Choices. That is what it is about: bringing back an industrial relations system that was expeditiously and effectively overturned by the Australian public at the 2007 federal election. The coalition parties, the National and Liberal parties, have not learnt. They have not learnt one little bit from that defeat. They are going to try to bring Work Choices onto our national highway. The importance of this highway to our economy could not be clearer. We are an island nation. We have one of the longest coastlines in the world—longer than the coastlines of the United States, China and Mexico. We depend on shipping for 99 per cent of our international trade. The latest data from the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics reveals that 1.2 billion tonnes of cargo moved across Australian waters in 2012-13—an 8.8 per cent increase on the previous year.

We, on the Labor side, recognise that a viable shipping industry is absolutely crucial for Australia's economic, environmental and security interests, but not every government does.
When we came to power in 2007, the shipping industry was in decline. The industry—like so many areas of the Australian economy, community and society—had suffered and shrunk under years of Howard government neglect. In 11 years of that government, from 1996 to 2007, the number of Australian flagged vessels working our domestic trade routes had more than halved, dropping from 55 to 21. So we took action to repair this. We made a commitment to do it. Just as we committed to, and put funding into, overturning the neglect in hospitals, schools, highways and telecommunications, we took action to revitalise the Australian shipping industry.

Labor governments invest in vital infrastructure to make sure our schools, hospitals, telecommunications and highways—whether it is coastline, rail or road—are improved. Over a three-year period, from 2010 through to 2012, we consulted with stakeholders and made sure that we engaged in a parliamentary process to give both sides of politics, as well as a parliamentary committee, the opportunity to examine what then became the Coastal Trading (Revitalising Australian Shipping) Act 2012. We engaged in extensive stakeholder consultation. We crafted those reforms based on the recommendations of that parliamentary inquiry.

We were about bolstering the local shipping industry and helping to make sure it effectively competed with overseas competition. We required companies shipping goods between domestic ports to seek an Australian ship in the first instance. However, our reforms allowed the participation of foreign owned ships if an Australian ship was not available. Those reforms included the following: taxation incentives for Australian flagged ships to encourage employment of Australian seafarers, a new 'second register' with tax benefits for ships engaged predominantly in international trade, coastal shipping reform and a workplace package focused on maritime skills development. Labor governments often focus on skills development, but coalition governments always seem to be letting the market determine those issues. Labor governments always seem to be making sure that the skills, talents and abilities of our workforce are enhanced through government initiation and action in consultation with industry.

These reforms needed time to work. They needed a government that recognised and defended Australia's national interests in terms of shipping. We did not get that when the coalition government came to power; we did not get that at all. We have seen that the Abbott-Turnbull Liberal government had vowed to repeal Labor’s reforms. The government's hostility towards these reforms was clear from the start—it is not a stretch to say that. The government has dealt with the Australian shipping industry with the same callous disregard it has shown in relation to the renewable energy industry.

However, the bill we are debating today goes beyond simply abandoning Labor's reforms. It deregulates Australia's domestic shipping industry, removing preference for Australian flagged and crewed ships to operate around our coastlines. There is a single permit system authorising foreign flagged ships to work the Australian coast for 12-month periods under the legislation. This single permit system will allow and encourage so-called flag-of-convenience ships—ships which fly the flag of a country other than the country of ownership—to compete against Australian flagged ships.

However, there is a crucial difference between a ship that flies an Australian flag and one that does not, and I will outline a few of those. Australian flagged ships are subject to
Australian standards of safety and environmental compliance; flag-of-convenience ships are not. Australian flagged ships operate under Australian taxation and industrial relations laws at port and in the open sea; flag-of-convenience ships do not. Australian flagged ships employ Australians and must pay them Australian wages; flag-of-convenience ships do not and will not.

Our laws regulating flag-of-convenience shipping in Australian waters are in our national interest. They are not unique. Canada, Japan, the United States and the European Union countries all do this. They have comparable laws that strongly regulate their coastal shipping to protect their national interests. In America, they have the 90-year-old Jones Act, which bans foreign ships and crews from US domestic shipping routes. All attempts, by a number of people, to change that have failed.

So, what is the government doing? The government knows that deregulating our shipping industry will cause the wholesale loss of jobs. We also know that, because of the work that has been done by the Australian Institute in its submission to the inquiry that looked into the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The cost-benefit analysis of the government's bill that was undertaken by the Australian Institute estimates that only 88 Australian seafarer jobs will remain under the department's preferred option for policy change included in the legislation that is before the chamber today.

The government modelling assumes significant job losses in Tasmania and in the Australian cruise line sector based out of Cairns in Queensland. I am surprised that the Tasmanian Liberal representatives were speaking on this bill, as well as any LNP members from Queensland speaking in relation to this, bearing in mind the impact on the tourism industry, which has so suffered by virtue of government action—both the Campbell Newman Liberal government, which was dispatched by Queenslanders at the end of January this year, and the current government that sits opposite us. In fact, 88 per cent of the claimed 'deregulatory savings' from this bill are from the replacement of Australian wage standards with Third World wage standards. How low can those opposite want Australian wages to go? That is where the savings are coming from. It is not red-tape reduction. It is actually a lowering of standards—of wages and conditions—for workers who work in this sector. It is a heartless calculation of 'deregulatory savings' when you remember that over 10,000 Australians work directly or indirectly in the industry.

What this government is doing today through this legislation is all about making deregulatory savings, and the way they are going to get them is to cut wages for those people who work in the sector. They know it. The explanatory memorandum says it. They know what this is about. But one after another the speakers on that side of the chamber, in the government, have fudged this and have actually not mentioned it at all, when it is crystal clear from the government's own documentation, which we have seen, that that is how they are going to do it. They are going to cut wages and conditions in the same way that the Howard government cut wages and conditions with Work Choices. And the Australian people dispatched them, in November 2007.

This bill also significantly extends to 183 days each year the time for which foreign flagged ships can operate in Australian waters before they are subject to Australia's workplace standards. It ushers in the prospect of Third World wages in the Australian coastal shipping trade. It will see Australian workers sacked and replaced with 90 per cent foreign crews paid
at far lower rates and not subject to Australian laws on wages and working conditions. While the government has modelled the 'deregulatory savings' on the basis of slashing Australian wages and conditions, it has not modelled the cost of job losses in local communities, up and down the coast and in Tasmania as well. We have three Liberals over there on that side who are from Tasmania and who are going to vote for this legislation to cut jobs in their area. The government has not modelled the loss of spending and has not modelled the loss of tax revenue or the higher welfare bill, with unemployment Newstart benefits having to be paid, that will flow from this bill. The government has ignored the negative impact of its policy on people—on families, individuals and communities. It has failed to model the impact that its plan will have without the income support to vulnerable young people, unemployed for months at a time.

Those on this side of the chamber have referred to the experience of Mr Bill Milby of North Star Cruises. An apology has still not been rendered by the former Prime Minister, the member for Warringah, or indeed the current Deputy Prime Minister, the member for Wide Bay, who alleged that Mr Milby was not telling the truth, that he was inaccurate in what he had to say when he was told, allegedly—and he was infuriated by this—that he basically had to put off his workers, re-register his ship and engage in the process of Work Choices on water. Mr Milby still awaits that apology, and I hope the government members opposite will give him that apology, because he deserves it, without a shadow of a doubt, based on the evidence that has come out at the Senate inquiry in relation to this legislation.

We recognise what the Abbott-Turnbull Liberal government does not recognise: that a viable shipping industry is vital to our interests. We understand that a home-grown maritime industry is absolutely crucial. We rely on it for 99 per cent of our international trade, which has grown at an annual rate of seven per cent since 2007. It is a shame that those opposite do not recognise that. It is a shame that they do not recognise that what this legislation is all about is an attack on workers' rights and conditions. It is a shame that they do not fess up and tell the truth about the 'deregulatory savings' and the cost and impact this is going to have on Australian families and communities. And it is a shame that those opposite will not actually get up and defend their communities; they will just defend their right-wing, market driven extremist ideologies on industrial relations.

Mr KELVIN THOMSON (Wills) (12:43): The Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 significantly extends the nonapplication of the Fair Work Act standards to workers on foreign ships working in Australian waters and significantly extends the application of Third World wage levels to the coastal trade, which has quite reasonably led to its being called, by the member for Blair and others, Work Choices on water. Eighty-eight per cent of the claimed deregulatory savings from this bill are from the replacement of Australian wage standards with Third World wage standards. Frankly, and as the member for Blair eloquently pointed out, this is outrageous.

For the past 30 years Australia has been undergoing an experiment. We have not been alone. Quite a few other countries have travelled the same path: free-market liberalism. Its hallmarks have been globalisation, privatisation, the free movement of goods, the free movement of people and deregulation. Its advocates said it would strengthen the Australian economy and make us more resilient to external shocks. But, far from making our economy more diverse and resilient, it has become narrow and vulnerable. We have much higher levels
of unemployment than we did 30 years ago. We have much higher levels of youth unemployment, much worse long-term unemployment and serious problems of underemployment, but the people who have dug us into this hole are unrepentant. They want us to keep digging. They talk about the need for economic reform, which is code for more privatisation, more deregulation and even freer movement of goods and people. They talk about leadership, which is code for demanding that politicians do what they want rather than what the voters want. This is a battle which is being fought on many fronts, and this legislation represents just such a front.

Research has indicated that relaxation of shipping regulations would see fewer than 100 seafarers remain in employment out of a current workforce of 1,177. That is according to the Australia Institute. That would be a loss of 93 per cent of the current workforce. This would result in the likely loss of these skills from the country altogether in the longer term. Cruise ship work would go from 40 per cent Australian to 100 per cent foreign, and all movements of iron ore, bauxite, petrol and crude oil between domestic ports would be undertaken by foreign crews. This dire forecast was made as a major Bass Strait freight company, SeaRoad, warned that it would reconsider a $100 million investment in two new cargo vessels if the government pushed ahead with this amendment that would dump rules that force foreign vessels to pay their crew Australian wages while working domestic routes.

The government's official modelling does not take into account the cost of lost Australian jobs, the lost local spending and local tax and higher welfare spending resulting from this package. The Australia Institute's submission to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee inquiry into the amendment found 'technical shortcomings' with the cost-benefit analysis:

- It fails to appropriately set the scope of the assessment—in other words, whose costs and benefits count. It appears to include millions in benefits to foreign-owned companies, with little consideration of Australian workers.
- It adopts an unorthodox approach to the value of labour, without adequate justification, or quantification of losses to seafarers. While the methodology is unclear, there appears to be an unstated $74 million present value loss to Australian seafarers in the CBA—cost-benefit analysis. The submission continues:
- It is based on very high exchange rates of AUD0.90 and 1.00 to the US dollar. This overstate the benefits of the reform to users of shipping by up to 35 per cent.

The Director of Research at the Australia Institute, Rod Campbell, said:

… the proposed Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 is likely to reduce employment for relatively little economic benefit.

He said:

The Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) and Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) of the Bill largely ignore the challenging economic reality faced by Australian coastal shipping.

Foreign flagged and crewed ships already have considerable access to the Australian coastal shipping market, making Australian coastal shipping possibly the only service sector facing competition that can use foreign labour while actually operating in Australia. By contrast, it is impossible for foreign trucking companies, rail companies or any other service provider to operate in Australia using international labour, paid at international rates. As crewing costs
make up between 36 per cent and 42 per cent of ship operating costs, this puts Australian crews at a 15 to 20 per cent disadvantage against international ships in terms of operating costs.

The economic reality of Australia's coastal shipping industry is that it must compete with both heavily subsidised land freight options and international shipping that can use foreign labour while in Australian waters. The free market ideology behind this bill simply ignores that reality. Rod Campbell said:

If an Australian coastal shipping industry is to survive, it needs policy support as is found in many other countries.

The report concluded:

... the proposed Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 is likely to reduce employment for relatively little economic benefit. What little benefit that is generated will accrue largely to foreign owned shipping and bulk freight using companies. Rather than increasing access for foreign-crewed ships, coastal shipping would benefit from a policy approach that sought to level the playing field for Australian-crewed ships.

With the size of the domestic shipping fleet declining to just 49, the government wants to drive down the price of freight between Australian ports by opening up the sector to more foreign competition. In the cruise ship sector it has been revealed that senior government officials advised North Star Cruises to lay off its local workers and employ cheaper foreign labour to remain competitive and to take its ship, True North, off the Australian shipping register and re-register under a foreign flag. This is outrageous. Whose side is this government on? Team Australia? I don't think so!

Under the proposed changes, two senior Australian crew members would still be required for a foreign boat to operate in Australia. North Star Cruises has a rotating crew of 40, meaning the overhaul could place the jobs of 38 people in jeopardy. The company representative, Bill Milby, said there were at least another 12 coastal passenger operations in the area that would be negatively affected by the changes.

We already have a situation where temporary licences are dominating the coastal shipping sector. The foreign seafarers who are currently working on the temporary licences do not pay income tax in Australia, nor do they pay income tax in their home countries. This is an element of the unfair operating cost advantages that the foreign flagged, temporary licence ships have over the Australian flagged general licence ships. As the Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers says:

If the Australian Parliament cannot legislate to exempt Australian seafarers from income tax, then it should not allow tax exempt foreign seafarers to operate foreign ships in the Australian coastal shipping sector.

The impact of the proposed amendment would be adverse for the few remaining Australian companies engaged in this shipping sector and adverse for the employment opportunities of Australian marine engineer officers, deck officers and other Australian seafarers.

The most significant consequence of this bill is to remove any priority of Australian flagged ship operators over foreign flagged ship operators. Passage of the bill would eliminate the remaining shreds of legislative and regulatory support for the Australian flagged coastal shipping industry. Passage of this bill would mean that Australia would knowingly concede a large degree of sovereign control over vessels which are routinely operating in Australian
waters. This is because, in international maritime law, the flag of the ship determines the law applying to the ship.

This is a move that would effectively green-light tax avoidance as the basis for low-cost shipping transport services around the Australian coast. If this parliament were to endorse this current bill, it would be endorsing tax avoidance by foreign ship operators in the name of providing cheaper freight services within Australia. Everyone likes a bargain, but we have been campaigning in international meetings for the reduction and elimination of tax avoidance by corporations. We would have greatly reduced credibility on this issue if we were to open the Australian domestic transport sector to international tax avoiders.

Australia does not allow domestic planes, trains, trucks and buses to be operated on the following terms: overseas vessel registration permitted; foreign personnel as operators working on foreign rates of pay and conditions; no corporate income tax payable in Australia; no personal income tax payable by the crew members; no superannuation payable to these personnel; Australian occupational licensing of these personnel not required; Australian national security checks not required for the personnel; and Australian health and safety laws not applicable. Given that, Australia should not allow ships in the domestic transport sector to operate on these terms either. Australian cargo operators will inevitably switch to the cheaper, tax-free services provided by the flag-of-convenience foreign ship ultimately owned by a company or other entity registered in a tax haven.

Australia is an island nation dependent on shipping for 99 per cent of its trade. We have one of the longest coastlines in the world. We have the fifth-largest shipping task of any nation. Ten percent of the world's trade by weight is carried by ship to or from Australia. Comparable nations all strongly regulate their coastal shipping for national interest reasons—that is, domestic shipping or shipping from one port to another within their borders. This includes the United States, which, via the Jones Act, bans foreign ships and crews from its coastal trade. Canada, Japan and the nations of the European Union do similarly. Australia, in fact, already has a coastal trading policy that allows participation of foreign ships where an Australian ship is not available.

This is a bill which removes revitalising Australian shipping from the objects of Australian coastal shipping. It replaces preference for an Australian flag on ships working the Australian coast with indifference to flagging, with so-called flag-of-convenience ships placed on the same level as those with the Australian flag. When a ship has an Australian flag, it is subject to Australian standards of safety, environmental compliance, taxation and industrial relations both here and on the open sea and it employs Australians. As has been said by others, this bill implements Work Choices on water, with 88 per cent of the government's estimated savings from this bill due to the sacking of Australian workers and their replacement with 90 per cent foreign crew paid Third World wage rates.

Our shipping industry, employing 10,000 Australian workers in direct and indirect roles, is an industry in itself. It deserves a regulatory regime that allows it to operate on a level playing field. That is what happens in every other industry, including in the road, rail and air freight sectors. Labor's position is simple. If you seek to move freight by road in this nation, the truck driver is paid Australian-level wages and operates under Australian workplace health and safety rules. If you seek to move freight by rail, the train driver is paid and required to operate in accordance with Australian law. The situation should be no different on what is referred to
The national interest in having an Australian shipping industry is based on three things. Firstly, there is the economic interest. We rely on shipping for 99 per cent of our trade, including an increasing amount of our petroleum supply. We cannot afford interruptions to this trade occasioned by reliance on foreign shipping. We need a maritime sector that calls Australia home. Secondly, there is the environmental interest. Shipping in Australian waters should maintain high environmental standards, especially in heavily used areas like the Great Barrier Reef. Recent incidents such as the Shen Neng, which occurred in 2010 on the Great Barrier Reef, the Pacific Adventurer in 2009 off the Sunshine Coast and the China Steel Developer this year off Mackay underscore the risk to our natural assets. It is highly preferable for local crews with local knowledge of shipping channels and not subject to fatigue or working under poorer work standards to be at the helm of ships working around our coast. Thirdly, there is the security interest. We know that screening of foreign crews is harder than screening of Australian crews. The Office of Transport Security acknowledges this, but a higher risk profile is not factored into the costs of this package. Our Navy benefits from the skills and support provided by the existence of an Australian merchant fleet.

As an island nation, we have a greater interest in a viable local maritime sector than most other nations. The impact of this bill would be adverse for the few remaining Australian companies engaged in the shipping sector. Less frequent reporting requirements would reduce the transparency of the sector and provide parliament with diminished insight into an industry which is generally out of sight and out of mind.

This bill should be rejected and new legislation should be drafted to require all commercial vessels consistently operating in Australian waters to be registered in Australia and to comply with all Australian laws. The fact that this bill deregulates Australian domestic shipping, removing preference for Australian flagged and crewed ships operating around the Australian coast, is regrettable. I believe that it should be amended in the way proposed by the opposition.

Mr SNOWDON (Lingiari) (12:58): I thank the member for Wills for his enunciation of the very clear reasons why Labor is opposing the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. As we know, this bill seeks to deregulate the Australian domestic shipping industry. It will remove preference for Australian flagged and crewed shipping operating around the Australian coast.

I will just put this in some context in regard to my own case. The Australian coast is one of the largest coastlines of any nation in the world. In terms of my own electorate, I look after all the coastline in the Northern Territory and a part of the Indian Ocean in terms of Christmas Island and Cocos Island. So I have had a long-term interaction with the shipping industry and the needs of communities around the coast for access to shipping to provide goods and services, as well as for the port of Darwin for imports and exports and, of course, Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands for basic foodstuffs; their basic supplies coming from the Australian mainland. I have long been a supporter of the Australian shipping industry and the Australian crews who crew those vessels. This bill, however, will remove the preference for Australian flagged and crewed ships operating around the Australian coast. It does this by
establishing a single permit system, granting access to ships of any nationality to work in our waters for a 12-month period. That, to me, raises some very serious concerns.

It significantly extends the period of exemption from domestic wages and wage standards for foreign ships. I have had cause to go onto foreign vessels in the past in Darwin just literally as a guest of the Waterside Workers Federation—this was before the MUA. When I went on board this vessel, and I can remember it vividly, it was about occupational health and safety issues and the wages being paid to foreign crews. The vessel that I visited was extraordinary in terms of its lack of health and safety, the oppressive conditions in which the crews worked and the pay which they received, which was far, far less than the standard required by Australian seafarers on Australian crewed vessels. This is what we are talking about here.

We are not just talking about having appropriate international standards; we are talking about foreign vessels doing jobs on Australian routes which should be done by Australian vessels, by Australian crews and under Australian wages and conditions. This is what this is about. And it is about the 10,000 people who work in the Australian shipping industry having the right to retain their jobs in that industry and not be exposed to vessels which will undercut their capacity to get jobs on the vessels on which they currently work because they are foreign flagged, have foreign crews, have foreign environmental standards to meet not Australian standards, and where the occupational health and safety records will, inevitably, be something that we need to examine very carefully and, of course, where wages and conditions will not have the oversight that they currently do with Australian crewed vessels.

The bill also changes arrangements for joining the Australian International Shipping Register by reducing international trading requirements and changing long-held industrial arrangements. These matters should be of concern to all of us. The bill seeks to repeal Labor's 2012 coastal trading laws, which were put in place as part of a broader package of taxation, regulatory and work-skills measures aimed at revitalising the Australian shipping industry. And it extends the non-application of the Fair Work Act standards to workers on foreign ships working in Australian waters.

Why would you do that? What you have in the back of your mind when removing the protections for workers on vessels in Australian ports? What could you possibly have as your motive? You would have thought that the government, working on behalf of the interests of all Australians, would say that it is extremely important that, in the context of these shipping arrangements, we should be looking after and protecting the rights of all workers who are in Australian ports whether or not they are on foreign crewed vessels. And they should be subject to the standards of the Fair Work Act, and appropriately so, and not have those interests and rights diminished by the government, which is moving to remove the application of the Fair Work Act standards on those vessels. Obviously, it extends the application of Third World wage levels to the coastal trade. It has been described by others as just Work Choices on water.

If you actually appreciate the nature of the work which is being done by Australian seafarers out of Australian ports on Australian crewed vessels and understand the importance they have for the local economy and the importance they have in ensuring that we have a high-standard maritime fleet with maritime workers who are properly trained, appropriately supervised and working under conditions which are deemed to be safe and working at wages
and salary levels which are appropriate to what they do, to then have a proposal which says, ‘We're going to remove all those regulatory requirements about wages and conditions and the owners of the industry will be better off having foreign flagged vessels because that will mean that they will not have to pay Australian wages and conditions,’ to me is an indictment on this government.

We all know where we sit in the world, the nature of our economy and the fact that we depend on shipping for 99 per cent of our trade. Why wouldn't we be protecting the interests of Australian seafarers? We have, as has been described by others, the fifth largest shipping task of any nation in the world and 10 per cent of the world's trade by weight is carried by a ship to or from Australia. I think I made the case that it is in Australia's interests, economically, to have a sustainable and viable shipping industry. It is in our national security interests that we have a sustainable and viable shipping industry just as it is in our environmental interests to ensure that we have a safe, sustainable and viable shipping industry. As others have said and the shadow minister has pointed out, that is what Labor's 2012 reforms were all about.

These reforms need time to work and a government that is actually committed to promoting Australia's national interest in shipping. Oddly—and this should be of no surprise to us—this government has ignored the fact that most of Australia's trading partners strongly regulate their own coastal shipping cabotage, for national interest reasons. That should be of no surprise to us. We should understand it. I am sure most of us do but, for some reason or other, the Australian government believes it should apply a different standard, here, from one that our major trading partners apply at home.

The United States has the Jones Act, which bans foreign ships and crews from its coastal trade. Japan, Canada and countries of the European Union do similar things. So if it is okay for our biggest trading partners and advanced western economies to regulate the coastal shipping trade, what is it that is peculiar about Australia that would force us to deregulate our shipping trade? Is it the fact that we have a Liberal government? That is the only thing I can think of. They are ideologically opposed to the idea that we might have a sustainable shipping industry in this country, one which is paying our seafarers fair wages and conditions and ensuring that we have a sustainable and viable coastal shipping industry. I would have thought that is—peculiarly—in our national interests. It appears that this government has decided that is not the case. They are happy to expose our shipping industry and the Australian community to the vagaries and uncertainties of international shipping companies visiting Australia and taking over the work that Australian flagged vessels currently undertake.

Under the proposals before us, ships with so-called flags of convenience are placed on exactly the same level as those that are Australian flagged. All Australian flagged vessels are subject to stringent Australian standards of safety, environmental compliance, taxation and industrial relations, both here and on the open sea. Importantly, these are Australian standards. They are what we expect of Australians who work onshore, but now we are saying we do not expect these same standards to apply to Australians who work on vessels. More importantly, we do not really want Australians working on these vessels; we want foreign crewed vessels, flagged from foreign ports, coming to Australia and taking that work off them.
As the member for Wills pointed out, we do not deregulate the Australian trucking industry and provide the opportunity for trucking companies from overseas to bring whatever vehicle they like onto Australian roads, to not have them registered under Australian conditions, not pay their drivers Australian wages, not have them regulated for the hours they work and all the other occupational health and safety issues that the trucking industry is governed by.

We will not have that happen, but we will allow it to happen in the shipping industry, despite the fact that we think it important we have a shipping industry. In the maritime industry you can do what you like. Take away all regulation. You can use whatever vessel you want from a foreign port and with a foreign flag. And you can bring a crew from wherever you like and pay them whatever you like, under the conditions you can determine that are acceptable to them, provided you are able to employ them, in the first place.

There is no question at all that this is Work Choices on water. As has been mentioned, 88 per cent of the government's estimated savings from the bill comes from the sacking of Australian workers and replacing them with 90 per cent foreign crews paid with third-world wage rates. That is what this bill is about. The government's own modelling makes no account for the cost of lost Australian jobs, lost local spending in local economies, lost local taxation and the inevitable increased welfare spending that will result from this dreadful package.

The government's official modelling assumes that the removal of Australian workplace standards will occasion significant sackings, including in Tasmania and the burgeoning Australian crews sector operating in the north of Australia. I see these vessels in Darwin all the time. What you are effectively saying to them, and we have heard this from an operator on the north-west coast, as it was suggested to this person, 'Get a foreign flagged vessel and bring a foreign crew and you can do what you like.'

That is not acceptable. It would not be acceptable on the Australian mainland, it is not acceptable on the waters of our coast and it will not be acceptable to the Australian community. As we know, around 10,000 Australian workers are in employment as a result of this industry. It is a vital local industry. It is a sustainable local industry. It is a good Australian industry, which needs to be protected—and not thrown to the wolves in the way this government proposes to do.

Mr LAURIE FERGUSON (Werriwa) (13:13): The Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, essentially, destroys any preference for Australian flagged and Australian staffed boats operating around our own coastline. It establishes a single-permit system, giving access to ships of any nationality to work the Australian coast for a 12-month period and significantly extends the period of exemption for domestic wage standards for foreign ships.

What epitomises the attitude of the administration is the fact that they even went so far as to delete revitalising Australian shipping as an objective of Australian shipping policy. That shows you how determined they are to destroy these jobs and worsen the very poor state of the industry itself.

It is essentially about destroying the 2012 initiatives of the former government. After consultation with a wide variety of reference groups, they came down with a policy to try to save this industry with tax reform, to encourage investment in contemporary and more efficient ships, to increase productivity, including a zero tax rate and seafarer tax exemption, to establish an Australian and international shipping register to augment our international
fleet, a streamlined licensing regime to provide clarity and transparency for long-term planning, and to establish clear boundaries around the agreed dimensions of foreign vessels in our coastal trade and the establishment of a maritime workforce development forum.

The previous speaker rhetorically asked, 'Why would they do this?' Quite frankly, I am not surprised they ask this. When we look at the attitudes of people in the Turnbull administration, we find the comment by the trade minister. When he was pressed in regard to saving Australian jobs under the Chinese trade agreement he said, 'It's complicated.' That was his defence for not giving it priority. He is a repeat offender, because on another occasion he said that jobs in Australia was 'a trivial issue'. Sorry, I have misquoted him. He said it was 'just a statistic'. In fact, it was the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development who commented that jobs were a trivial issue. The former Minister for Industry and Science, Mr Macfarlane, who was profoundly thanked by the incoming Prime Minister for making room for some other people in the ministry, spoke of the threatened jobs at BlueScope, the thousands that look like they might go. He reassured us with the very comforting comment that it would not be as bad as the car industry. So we see the attitude of this government.

The Australia Institute has estimated that 93 per cent of these jobs will disappear and that 88 per cent of the financial gains to be made would come from the replacement of Australian workers with overseas workers, often in flag-of-convenience ships, whether they are from Panama, Liberia et cetera. That is of no disquiet to this government. It does not concern them that SeaRoad, a local freight company, would say that it is reconsidering a $100 million investment in purchasing cargo vessels. It would not concern the government, despite the fact that they denied it, that Australian operators in the tourist industry are being told: 'The best way forward for you is to give up. Don't try with Australians. Just replace your staff with overseas workers.'

The context of this, as we heard yesterday in this parliament, is that it is no worry that seven per cent of our workforce are people here on temporary work and student visas. Seven per cent of all Australian jobs are held by them. The fact that, for the foreign million in this country, rates as low as $4 an hour are proffered for jobs is of no concern!

However, they do have some cheerleaders behind them. The IPA are a renowned influence on the government. While Labor is attacked for being xenophobic racist and is said to be going back to the White Australia policy of 1900 because we believe that trade agreements should not be utilised to smash employment conditions in this country or to displace our workers, the IPA—a very close associate of the government in regard to this bill—commented through Mr Chris Berg on 26 May 2015. Do you know what his concern about our shipping industry was? He asked:

Are Chinese registered vessels allowed to ship goods between Brisbane and Sydney? Under highly regulated conditions designed to dissuade them from doing so.

That is the priority of the IPA. They are not concerned with the tax revenue that comes from Australian workers. They are not concerned with the retail money that flows when people are employed in this country. They are more concerned that Chinese vessels are restricted in their ability to move between Brisbane and Sydney.

Chris Berg had another worry—pilotless crews in a coastal environment which is world renowned are finding it difficult to operate under the current conditions. He further bemoaned:
Liberalisation is always accompanied by the bleatings of those whose privileges are being taken away. Australian jobs are being thrashed, families are losing their breadwinners and shops are not able to rely on those dollars coming through the shopping centre each week. They are 'bleatings' to be ignored!

We have seen the real threat of this on many occasions. We have had the MV Apellis, a Greek owned, Panama registered boat that arrived in WA, wages having been unpaid for eight months, the steward being paid $200 a month, having not enough food to make the trip to Indonesia and food and water being rationed out. We saw the way in which they intended to expand this with the Alexander Spirit. The Australian crew of 36 was thrown out by Caltex and Teekay Shipping. They alleged that they were going international and that is why they had to do it, but the workers—most of them still out of jobs two months later—were to find that that very ship was coming back to these shores.

We can go internationally to see what this government intends for Australian workers. In September of 2009 in Ceuta, the Spanish enclave in Morocco, the Turkish owned Rhone—as in the French river—with a crew of 14, was understocked for the whole trip and had to be detained because their boat needed urgent hull repairs. The workforce, which was there for five months, was 'penniless and forced to rely primarily on the handouts from Ceuta port authority and local charities'. Some $233,000 in wages was held, and three years later it remains unresolved. That is the destiny and the reality that this government wants for the Australian coastal line.

From 2001 to 2010, according to the ILO—that is not the international union movement but the International Labour Organization—1,600 workers were abandoned around the world. It has been estimated in regard to flag-of-convenience vessels that 62 per cent of the workforce labours for over 60 hours a week and 27 per cent labours 12 to 15 hours a day. This is the way in which this government hopes to attract the boats to our shores and decrease the cost of cargo going in and out. This is what they believe is a solution to what they see as too many costs.

Many people have mentioned the Jones Act of the United States, which is designed not only to protect employment but also—from a defence point of view—to ensure that ships are constructed with American content. No more than 25 per cent of the crew are allowed to be foreign. It is all right for John McCain to say that it is antiquated law that has for too long hindered free trade, but unfortunately he does not seem to be making much of an impact around that.

What we are clearly seeing here, on one of the largest coastlines in the world, which carries a significant volume of trade, is a very strong attempt to minimise the working conditions of people in this country. The International Transport Workers' Federation has dealt very strongly with this question of flags of convenience. We see a situation where Panama, Liberia and others basically give these corporations a free hand to undermine people's working conditions around the world. It is interesting to note that six per cent of Liberia's overall income comes from these registrations.

In conclusion, I note that it is highly predictable that the government would do this. They have no concern with 14½ per cent of the population being unemployed or underemployed. The fact is that the government are nowhere near their target of creating one million jobs. Despite the occasional reference to the creation of 325,000 jobs, at the same time, so many
jobs have been disappearing. We have a recipe here for low wages, poor onboard conditions, inadequate food, lack of proper rests, evasion of international laws, minimal registration fees, exploitation of the global labour market and minimal taxes.

I do not think anyone would argue that the 2012 reforms have been a significant success story; there has been minimal time for them to operate. The national interest is a very low priority for this government. Employment in this field and the possibility for people's children to go into this field are low priorities for this government. It is all ideologically driven, with elements such as the IPA saying, 'Let it all hang out! It is a dreadful, worrying thing that we haven't got the Chinese along our coastline, being able to travel to all our ports.'

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (13:25): I rise to speak on the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. In contemplating this legislation, I am drawn to our national anthem and the line, 'our home is girt by sea', reminding us that this great southern land is an island nation. It is a nation that is responsible for 11 per cent of the earth's surface—it is a small nation in terms of population but it is responsible for a large slab of the planet.

Obviously, we have a long seafaring history—perhaps a seafaring history of 100,000 years long—certainly in terms of more recent explorers over the last 300, 400 or 500 years, and a bit further if you include the Macassans coming to the Northern Territory and the northern coast. Prior to Europeans making that long, arduous journey across the seas to reach Australia, there were seafaring Aboriginal people including the Ngaro people in North Queensland. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is home to one of the oldest sites of habitation of this seafaring group. It is estimated to date back 9,000 years. For these Aboriginal people it was essential to navigate the sea for their survival. For the early European seafarers there was no other way to reach Australia or to return to Europe other than across the oceans.

We have always been a seafaring nation by necessity, but those seafaring ways have also honed our skills as competitive sporting sailors as well. Since 1945 Australians have made a sport of negotiating the notoriously treacherous waters of Bass Strait in the annual Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. We have even been known to win famous yacht races, as we saw with—rest in peace—Alan Bond and that incredible win back in the 1980s. Complementing the outback and those outback stories of Australia like Clancy of the Overflow, The Sundowners and The Man from Snowy River, we have always had that seafaring history. It is a part of what we are as a nation.

Even more importantly, seafaring is crucial to our economy, as we are a trading nation. We are still dependent on shipping for 99 per cent of our trade. That will hopefully change as we provide services via the National Broadband Network. Nevertheless, shipping is a very important Australian industry. It employs 10,000 Australian workers, some of whom I met a few months back. I met with some workers who had been stood down—sacked, effectively—via text message in the middle of the night. I went down to the docks to catch up with some of them and their families. The seafaring industry needs to be fostered and it needs to be looked after.

Labor has always been committed to fostering the Australian shipping industry—an industry that was faltering a little bit under the Howard government. We brought in reforms in 2012 to revitalise the shipping industry. The aim of Labor's reforms was to allow the Australian shipping industry to compete on a level playing field within our borders. It was not...
about tariffs, but it had a little bit of pragmatism and a little bit of economic nationalism—something that we need to do a bit more regularly when we look at what other nations are doing. The reforms brought in in 2012 included: tax incentives for flagging ships that were Australian and to encourage employment of Australian seafarers; a second register, with tax benefits to ships engaged predominantly in international trade; and a reforms package focusing on maritime skills development. The Abbott-Turnbull government has been on a mission to repeal these important Labor reforms. The Abbott-Turnbull government's undermining of these laws from the time they were implemented has had a deterrent effect on investment in Australian shipping and has sadly seen a continuing decline in the Australian trading fleet.

This bill before the chamber strikes at the heart of these reforms, removing support for the Australian shipping industry and removing the level playing field for Australian flagged ships operating in their own waters. It also erodes protections for workers in the shipping industry. If you work in Australia, whether it be moving freight across the country on land or around the country on water, you should be working under Australian pay and conditions. The bill before the chamber erodes these protections. It is effectively Work Choices on water. Eighty-eight per cent of the savings the government estimates will flow from this bill will be due to Australian workers being replaced by 90 per cent foreign crews which will be working for Third World wage rates, as we have seen too often. Whether it be the Taiwanese fruit pickers that were exploited or the 7-Eleven workers, we see that it is hard to enforce the standards, particularly with respect to the racism of the free market when it comes to foreign workers from poorer countries.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): The debate is now interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The member for Moreton may resume his address at a later hour.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Workplace Relations

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (13:30): Yet again, we see this government—and it does not matter who the Prime Minister is—out there proudly talking about how they want to cut the penalty rates of 4.5 million hardworking Australians, many of whom are on low pay. And how much will it cost these low-paid workers? What would happen if this government, whether it be led by Malcolm Turnbull or Tony Abbott, succeeded in cutting penalty rates? This government will see $50 million taken out of the pockets—the household budgets—of some of our hardest-working yet lowest-paid Australians.

We saw, over the three-week break, this government try and spin it any which way they could, because they know how unpopular this is in the electorate and they know how it will hurt people. We first heard the Prime Minister try and justify that: 'We now have a seven-day-a-week economy; it is no longer a Monday-to-Friday economy.' Well, let us see what happens when we try and move the grand final to a Tuesday. Let us see what happens when we try and move the NRL grand final to a Monday; let us see how many people are jumping up and down then about penalty rates and weekends. Then they said: 'Let's introduce tax credits'—more spin—and yesterday the Prime Minister tried to stand here and say: 'We support collective bargaining, and people may wish to give up their penalty rates through collective
bargaining.' There is a very big difference between collective bargaining and cutting— *(Time expired)*

**Death Penalty**

Mr RUDDOCK (Berowra) (13:31): I want to raise the standard of the parliament by raising a matter today on which members agree rather than disagree. Last Saturday, 10 October, marked the World Day Against the Death Penalty. This is, in my view, a matter of global importance. To mark this occasion, I was pleased to be able to speak at the Australians Against Capital Punishment annual dinner in Brisbane. I want to thank Stephen Keim SC for the work he put into arranging it, and to acknowledge my fellow speaker, Julian McMahon, who was very, very much involved in defending the two Australians tragically executed in Indonesia. At the dinner I was able to outline the activities currently being undertaken by colleagues in this parliament in raising awareness and ending the death penalty, and the ongoing busy schedule of the Australian Parliamentarians against the Death Penalty, which I chair with the member for Fowler. Indeed, we met with Amnesty International and Reprieve only yesterday.

I welcome the inquiry into Australia's advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty—the first of its kind—which is being undertaken by the Human Rights Subcommittee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, which I chair. Finally, I want to commend the Minister for Foreign Affairs for her advocacy in a recent address to the United Nations General Assembly in which she affirmed Australia's strong opposition to the death penalty. *(Time expired)*

**Chambers, Councillor Don, OAM**

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (13:33): Today I rise to acknowledge the passing of what we in country Australia call a very good man: Don Chambers OAM—active in politics; Vice President of the Indi branch of the National Party; represented that party in the Indi election in 2001; councillor for the Indigo Shire; local identity; lover of life; environmentalist; believer in community; a master sportsman; and much-loved member of the Rutherglen and North East communities.

Don was a friend. His family and my family were from the same town, and we had many discussions about the meaning of life, and especially when his wife, Margaret, died six years ago. In the way of country politics, we had a lot to do with each other.

Like many people in rural communities, he had a strong commitment to the environment, to our towns and sustainability. In this belief he was informed by local Aboriginal elders and was a tenacious supporter of Aboriginal recognition. I recall gathering beside the lake at Benalla, standing next to Don, and how proud he was that he had been able to convince the then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in Victoria, Jeanette Powell, to support the Pangerang people in seeking recognition.

Waste watch was a passion—serving on the North East Regional Waste Management Group; supporting recycling in all its forms—and linking to this was his commitment to Tidy Towns, making the world a better place. For 10 years he was the national chairman of the Keep Australian Beautiful program. Don Chambers loved life— *(Time expired)*
Schools: Music

Mrs PRENITCE (Ryan) (13:35): I rise today to talk about an exciting upcoming school initiative, Music: Count Us In. On Thursday, 29 October, more than 500,000 students from more than 2,100 schools across Australia will come together for one of our biggest school initiatives. Participating schools across the country will all sing the same song at exactly the same time.

Last year we watched 1,000 students fill the Great Hall for this event, which is supported by the Department of Education and Training. This year I will join Grovely State School, in my electorate, who have a wonderful program planned. All the students will gather in the school quad to count down and sing with participating schools from all over Australia streamed through live webcasts. Not only will the whole school sing, but they will also have members of their band and strings program and their youngest class of recorder players play. They are also including members of the community who rehearse at the schools, such as the No Strings Attached concert band and, hopefully, the community zumba class to add rhythm to the event.

Once again, the song chosen is a song written by selected students from across Australia, working with Marcia Hines and John Foreman. So it really will be a wonderful initiative and a great opportunity to promote music education, and I encourage any schools not already involved to sign up at www.musicaustralia.org.au.

Workplace Relations

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (13:36): I rise to speak about the importance of penalty rates. I note the member for Hume is in the chamber—he has been out calling for an abolition of penalty rates on Sundays. My experience of penalty rates comes from a mother who was a nurse and a partner of 23 years who was a shift worker working in child protection. So I have had that experience of having family members being away every second Christmas and working every second weekend. I have seen what that sacrifice is like. I have seen the importance of it in my own family, and I know how important it is for the 4½ million Australians who rely so heavily on penalty rates.

There are the young kids like my neighbours who go to work on a Sunday and the people I see on my morning walk on Sundays who have to make coffees and breakfasts that so many people access. I am yet to be lobbied by anyone in my electorate saying, 'I cannot access a coffee or a meal or a drink on Sundays.' With so many of the cafes that I go to, it is just not the reality at all in inner-city Brisbane. Kate Carnell and those who are talking about going back to central wage fixing have not recognised the fact that enterprise bargaining has been in since 1993. They should leave penalty rates alone. (Time expired)

National Carers Week

Dr SOUTHCOTT (Boothby) (13:38): This week is National Carers Week and it is a time to recognise and celebrate the outstanding contribution that Australia's unpaid carers make to our nation. There are 2.7 million carers in Australia who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends with a disability, a mental illness, a chronic condition, a terminal illness or who are frail aged. As co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Carers Group, I am very aware of the huge contribution they make. Just a few weeks ago, we launched a report on the economic impact that carers have in Australia. It is estimated that in 2015, carers will
provide $1.9 billion of unpaid care. The cost of that care were it provided by paid care workers is estimated at $60.3 billion.

People can help raise awareness this National Carers Week by making a free pledge to help build a more carer-friendly Australia. Carers contribute so much to our community and yet they often experience social isolation and find it harder to maintain employment, enter the workforce or participate in education. A carer-friendly Australia is one where unpaid carers are recognised and supported during and after their caring role, across all spectrums of society. I encourage others to join me in making the pledge to help build a more carer-friendly Australia by going to www.carersweek.com.au or tweeting something with the hashtag 'carers2015'.

Workplace Relations

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:39): I rise today to talk about penalty rates and the effect they have on the community at large in Australia. Penalty rates are paid to workers who work unsociable hours. We include unsociable hours to be beyond five pm in the afternoon and Sundays—times when families generally spend time together. Yesterday, the Prime Minister was asked by the member for Gorton to share evidence that cutting penalty rates would create jobs. Those opposite, particularly those on the back bench, seem to be intent on spreading the fallacy that this will occur. We got more lessons from Malcolm on how we should ask questions, but no response to the question and no evidence.

Equity is the way to prosperity, not trickle-down economics, and that is all we are getting dished up from that side. They may have changed Prime Minister, but they have not changed tack. They are still coming after Australia's workers. They are still coming after people's pay packets. They are coming after driving down wages in this country, which is going to drive down equity. I will leave you with a few comments that I got from people in the electorate yesterday: Michelle said, 'We need some family time;' Marianne said, 'I do not want our economy to be based on wage theft;' and Susan said, 'When is he convening parliament on a Sunday?' That is a fair question: when is he going to convene parliament on a Sunday? (Time expired)

Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development

Dr STONE (Murray) (13:40): On the weekend I attended in Bangkok the General Assembly of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development. This forum is chaired by Japan, which helps fund the forum with its base in Bangkok. Australia contributes over $500,000 over three years, in particular to advance gender equality and women's empowerment through this very important MP forum. Australia has funded a men's committee of MP champions from across the region who are aiming to eradicate intimate partner violence, in particular. I mediated the special panel on gender equality and women's empowerment: what can parliamentarians do to reduce gender gaps and advance gender equality for all women?

Also, I am pleased that I was elected the vice-chair of this regional forum on the weekend, with Japan continuing to be chair. I am very pleased to participate in that way. The key goal for us moving into the future will be to address the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly goals 3 and 5, and to make sure that the Pacific communities have more attention, given the conditions for women and girls are not as they should be in developed nations. I
commend this forum. It was a very important experience over the weekend, with all of my parliamentarian colleagues from the Pacific and Asia. All were doing their best for achieving gender equality.

**Workplace Relations**

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (13:42): When I recently posted on Facebook my support for penalty rates and the important role that they play not only in the livelihood of young people in my electorate but also the regional economy of towns like Newcastle, I was overwhelmed by the level of support from Novocastrians and, indeed, the broader community. Their reasons for supporting penalty rates were broad, but I want to highlight just two of the stories that were shared with me on Facebook. There is a single mum and she is a cleaner at a major hospital in Newcastle. She said:

Yes we do need penalty rates! Who's going to work weekends, arvos or night shifts for a flat rate? Definitely not me—I'd rather stay home with my children.

The father of a young university student said:

Our daughter is a uni student. Her only income is part-time work in a café. Penalty rates help her put petrol in the car and pay for other essentials.

There is no evidence that cutting penalty rates will create jobs, as claimed by the government—not here and not internationally—but there is plenty of evidence around to show that cutting penalty rates will hit, in particular, regional and rural economies hard, as it will young people. The McKell Institute has done some fabulous analysis of exactly that. The government needs a plan to get the 800,000 unemployed people back into jobs rather than attacking those who rely on penalty rates to make ends meet. Let's address this nation's unemployment problem rather than enter the— *(Time expired)*

**National Carers Week**

Mrs SUDMALIS (Gilmore) (13:44): This week is National Carers Week. I would like to relay a story about a wonderful woman who never knew she was going to become a carer. Her son, Luke Stojanovic, was a great motocross motorcyclist. He had an accident and came down on his head. He ended up with massive brain trauma. His mother sat by his bedside while he was in a coma and waited for him to come out of that coma. He then started to learn to sit up. He had to learn to talk again—that is not there yet. He had to learn to eat again. She has been his constant carer for the remaining time, right up to now. I saw them last week, when I went to say to Luke that he had to make sure he had actually shaved himself. He has now learnt to stand on his own two feet, with help, but he has done that. They learnt to sign, with one hand, so that he can actually communicate. His mother has been a constant carer during this time.

Luke set himself a goal—he raised more than $77,000 for the Liverpool Hospital Brain and Trauma Unit. He rode a recumbent tricycle for 180 kilometres. He has set himself a goal and I will do everything I can to assist his family. He wants to try to get a medal in the Special Olympics. At the moment there is no such event, but Lukey, rock on, we are with you and we are going to try to make it work for you. He is an amazing young man and his mother, Kim Stojanovic, is a champion amongst parents.

**Workplace Relations**

Mr LAURIE FERGUSON (Werriwa) (13:45): The current Prime Minister's language in regard to penalty rates has been a little bit more careful than his predecessor's, who basically
said that workers can like it or lump it. If they do not want to work on weekends they do not have to, even though in many cases people on low wages depend on penalty rates for 30 per cent of their income. However, last week on 3AW the normally voluble Prime Minister was thoroughly lost for words when the interviewer actually asked him what he meant when he said that workers could get compensation for the loss of penalty rates. Of course, it was not the only bad time he had last week: the Liberal Party state council was not too good, either!

Essentially, we have a situation where people's lives in the community, such as sporting opportunities, driving people around and being carers, are being undermined by the spread of hours on the weekend. There should be compensation to people for this. A government that has accomplished 14.5 per cent underemployment and unemployment, which means there are 800,000 people out of work in this country, should be focused on solutions to that.

The Prime Minister cannot give any fundamental statistical evidence for the growth of jobs that will flow from the reduction of other people's wages on weekends. We have not heard one of them come forward with statistical evidence to establish this. It is just pie-in-the-sky talk to justify the ripping off of people's conditions.

Victoria: Traffic Congestion

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin) (13:47): I rise again to draw the attention of the House of the debilitating impact that traffic congestion continues to have in my home state of Victoria, and to highlight the positive plan that this government has to fix the problems. Without decisive action, congestion will soon cost the Victorian economy $9 billion each year. That is why this government has announced plans that includes support for six major transport infrastructure projects to get Melbourne moving again. These projects include the widening of the Monash Freeway, the construction of the 'missing link' in the Ring Road and, most importantly, the East West Link. Each of these projects will provide relief for some of the key congestion hotspots in our city, particularly those in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

In contrast, all that Bill Shorten has is a bit of a thought bubble that includes no new ideas, no new projects and no understanding of their impact in the foreseeable future. But why would we expect anything more from Labor? After all, this is the party that spent $640 million not to build the East West Link, which they inherited from the former state government. In contrast, this government maintains $3 billion on the table to build the East West Link, which will save commuters in my electorate three hours of travel time per week. I want to thank Minister Hunt and the Minister for Cities and the Built Environment for their work in putting together this wonderful infrastructure plan for Victoria.

Workplace Relations

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (13:48): Work Choices may be dead, buried and cremated, but the coalition government's determination to drive down wages and conditions for working Australians is alive and well. This is the government that has virtually done away with labour market testing and outsourced mineral and gas projects to foreign entities, who in turn bring in foreign labour to do work that could otherwise be done by Australians. It is a government that appears oblivious to the growing claims of overseas workers being exploited. It is also a government that has included special labour mobility provisions in the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement. Indeed, we are currently debating in this place shipping legislation that
effectively outsources Australian jobs to foreigners. It is doing all of this because it wants to
drive down wages and conditions for working Australians.

Now, it wants to abolish penalty rates. In doing so it will hit some of Australia's lowest-
paid workers the hardest, people who often have only part-time work and who do the jobs and
the hours that most other Australians would refuse to do. Cutting penalty rates is not industrial
relations reform but mean-spirited policy direction by a government that has become a puppet
to big business and cares little for those doing it the toughest.

**Hume Electorate: SPYfest Goulburn**

**Mr TAYLOR** (Hume) (13:50): Dinner suits were dusted off and martinis well shaken, but
not stirred. Goulburn hosted the inaugural SPYfest festival a couple of weeks ago, and it was
a big kick to be there to welcome back former James Bond, George Lazenby. Many of us had
forgotten that George was a Goulburn boy. At 76, I can assure you that he is in great form. He
did not drop down in a parachute, but he came in style, in an open-top Aston Martin, for the
festival parade. Thousands lined Auburn Street to cheer him on. The Aston Martin actually
driven by George in 1969 in the movie *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* was also in the
parade. There was a Moneypenny, lots of spy kids, Austin Power look-alikes and some
glittering Bond girls.

Many Goulburnites have remembered going to school with George. Others recalled the
Lazenbys living in Faithfull Street. Goulburn's mayor presented George with the keys to the
city, and a gala ball was held in his honour. Council events manager, Sarah Ruberto, deserves
a special mention, as does local identity Chris Gordon, whose idea it was to have a festival in
honour of George.

Congratulations especially to the SPYfest committee of volunteers—Mark Simon, Wendy
Antony and Julie Judd—who are already planning a sequel. We will be sure to let everyone
know when Sean Connery is in the bag.

**Workplace Relations**

**Mr STEPHEN JONES** (Throsby) (13:51): In the 1980s Australia made a choice. The
choice was between being a low-wage, low-productivity economy and being a high-wage,
high-productivity economy. It will surprise nobody in this place—or nobody on this side of
the chamber—that we went for a high-wage, high-productivity economy and we put the
reforms in place to ensure that would occur.

We know that we have a productivity challenge in this country. It absolutely went
backwards under the people on that side of the chamber. Instead of putting in place the
necessary reforms to do something about productivity—investing in higher education and
investing in vocational education—their only answer to the productivity challenge is to go
after people's wages and conditions. They are a one-trick pony: go after people's wages and
conditions. If the students of this country were concerned about their $100,000 university
degrees, they will have seen nothing yet when those opposite start going after their penalty
rates, because penalty rates are how students pay their way through university.

In question time yesterday, the Prime Minister, Mr Turnbull, argued that union officials
around the country for decades have been trading off one benefit for another. What he does
not understand is that there is a world of difference between a union and its members
bargaining for one thing in exchange for another and the government reaching into every pay packet— *(Time expired)*

**Road Infrastructure**

Mr TEHAN (Wannon) (13:53): As you know full well, Mr Deputy Speaker Broadbent, the federal government is investing in rural road infrastructure to keep our communities safe and our businesses moving. As part of the record $50 billion investment in infrastructure, residents in Wannon are beginning to see the benefits of over $500 million of road funding to local roads and highways. This local funding from the federal government is a collection of a number of projects, including Roads to Recovery, the Black Spot Program, the Bridges Renewal Program and major road upgrades. The major road in Wannon that is a federal government responsibility, the Western Highway, is receiving $404 million for its duplication between Ballarat and Stawell. In the case of specific needs, the coalition is also responding to community concerns. Work is beginning on the Condah-Hotspur Road, which is receiving a $2.5 million upgrade to widen, strengthen and seal the over 14 kilometres north of Heywood. This will help with the demand placed on the road from heavy vehicles, making it safer for trucks, school buses, tourists and the community.

Sadly, however, this commitment is not being supported by the state Labor government, which has cut $160 million from the Country Roads and Bridges Program in its first budget. This money should be returned immediately. The state Labor Premier should also explain why he is taking road funding out of rural communities to spend on his own electorate. It is an absolute disgrace— *(Time expired)*

**Workplace Relations**

Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (13:54): The problem with those opposite is that they want something for nothing. That is their idea of enterprise bargaining. Only the other day, I was on the *Sydney Morning Herald* website, and there was the member for Hume out there, talking about the reduction of penalty rates. Then we came here yesterday and, after questioning, the Prime Minister said, 'But what about the deal between Business SA and the SDA? What about that deal in South Australia?' Let me tell you what happened with the deal in South Australia. The pay rises were so significant under it that not one employer has signed up for it. Here is the thing: those opposite do not want to have enterprise bargaining. They do not want to have collective bargaining. What they want is to have something for nothing. What they want to do is reach into every worker's pocket and rip out their Sunday penalties. What do they want to give them in exchange? Absolutely nothing. Zero. That is their agenda. That is why they have sicked the Productivity Commission onto penalty rates. That is why we have the member for Hume up there, auditioning for an assistant ministry spot on his way to higher office. He does not want to trade away workers' wages; he just wants to— *(Time expired)*

**North Queensland Cowboys**

Mr EWEN JONES (Herbert—Government Whip) (13:56): Lo, it came to pass that James Tamou was tackled. He played the ball quickly and Jake Granville passed the ball bullet-like to Johnathan Thurston, who slotted it straight between the posts. That was the end of just one game, but what it meant was the end of a 20-year journey for the North Queensland Cowboys, a journey that was started in 1994 by the likes of Doug Kingston, Kerry Boustead and Ronnie
McLean, who had a vision, put the people of the north first and said, 'We can do this.' In heaven, 'Big Mussy' would have been up there having a beer with 'Muzza', Graham Murray, a previous coach, over the success that they saw when they took this thing through.

The thing about the Cowboys is that they are not just a football team; they are not just a football club; they are part of our community. There are blokes like Ray Thompson, who was the 18th man for both the Melbourne game and the grand final. He really wanted to play for the Townsville Blackhaws in their grand final but was unable to. He is the epitome of the Cowboys. He is a local boy, a Torres Strait Islander, plays for the Kumuls and tackles like a demon. There are blokes like Glenn Hall, who finished his career this year. He has been a fantastic servant to our club after winning a premiership with Manly. He will be sadly missed, but we hope that he stays in town. Lastly, Peter Parr is easily the best signing in our football club. (Time expired)

Workplace Relations

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton) (13:58): It is telling, isn't it, that the first foray that the new Prime Minister makes into the area of industrial relations is to open up a debate on penalty rates. Here he comes—the Prime Minister who wants to cut penalty rates in this country. The first thing that this Prime Minister said is that the weekend is dead. He pronounced the death of the weekend in this country, and, of course, he said, 'There's a seven-day economy.' There are 4.3 million Australian workers who rely upon penalty rates. What does the Prime Minister think the consequences will be for them if, indeed, the Prime Minister has his way and allows for the slashing of penalty rates in this country? It will be a sad and sorry day in this country if we allow this Prime Minister to set the agenda to slash penalty rates, which will inflict such pain on ordinary working families. Families rely upon those penalty rates to ensure that they can pay for school uniforms, pay the rent, pay the mortgage, pay for the car rego, pay for petrol and make ends meet. In this country, we want to see a fair go. This Prime Minister wants to see the death of the weekend and, indeed, the death of penalty rates. He should reconsider his position and think about sitting down with ordinary workers once in his life.

Uganda: Yotkom Medical Centre

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (13:59): Today I would like to acknowledge the outstanding humanitarian work of two incredible people from my electorate of Bonner. Dr Andrew Wright runs a medical practice in Wynnum West. He has served the Wynnum community well for many years. He and his wife, Anne, have also dedicated many years to improving the lives of people in the town of Kitgum in Northern Uganda.

The Wrights have spent their own time and money to provide Kitgum with much-needed medical services—

The SPEAKER (14:00): Unfortunately, I need to interrupt the member for Bonner. In accordance with standing order 43, the time for members' statements has concluded. I call the Leader for the Opposition on indulgence.

SHADOW MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:00): For the information of the House, I present a revised list of the shadow ministry.
The document read as follows—

**SHADOW MINISTRY LIST**

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<td>Senator the Hon Kim Carr</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader on State and Territory Relations</td>
<td>Senator Katy Gallagher*</td>
<td>Hon Bill Shorten MP*</td>
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<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
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Tuesday, 13 October 2015  HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  10993

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Shadow Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.

* Senator Katy Gallagher’s appointment to the Shadow Ministry is effective from 1 November 2015. Senator the Hon Jan McLucas will serve as Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness and Shadow Minister for Mental Health, and represent the Shadow Minister for Northern Australia, the Shadow Minister for Health, the Shadow Assistant Minister for Health, the Shadow Minister for Sport and the Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs in the Senate until 31 October 2015.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Trade with China

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:00): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the China free trade agreement. Will the Prime Minister commit to working with Labor to safeguard Australian jobs?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:00): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I can only note that, until at least very recently, his only contribution to the debate about the China free trade agreement—while every other Australian was looking forward to the opportunities it gives us, opening up the world's largest single market—was to bob like a cork in the slipstream of the CFMEU. He went along and, by his silence, consented to everything that they were saying.

Now we hear, today, that the Opposition has put forward some proposals. I can confirm to the House what the minister for trade has already said: we will consider, in good faith, the proposals put forward by Labor with regard to the ChAFTA and, having considered them, we will then respond. We welcome Labor's rather belated acceptance that this is a matter that should be treated seriously and treated as one of importance for the whole of the nation. I
thank the Leader of the Opposition for his latter-day brush with reality and his preparedness to actually get down to talking about the real issues that confront Australians. My government will consider Labor's proposals and respond in due course.

**National Security**

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (14:02): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister explain how the government is working with states and territories to ensure the most effective and coordinated approach to preventing a terrorist attack in the future?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:02): I thank the honourable member for his question and I note his long experience in counter-terrorism matters and the continued effective contribution he makes to the government's efforts in this area and our policy development.

Since 12 December last year, when our national security agencies raised the national terrorism public alert level to high, 24 people have been charged as a result of nine counter-terrorism operations around Australia. That is more than a third of all terrorism related arrests since 2001. The government approaches this issue in a very agile way. We are constantly monitoring the threat; we are working closely with states and territories and ensuring that our laws give our security services the powers that they need to deal with the challenge.

In the next sitting fortnight, the government will be introducing into the parliament a fifth instalment of counter-terrorism laws, which have been developed in conjunction with New South Wales and, of course, the other states and territories. It was foreshadowed by the Attorney-General at the Countering Violent Extremism summit in June this year. The bill will, among other things, lower the age for a control order from 16 to 14 years of age. It will facilitate the monitoring of individuals subject to control orders, provide greater protection to sensitive information in control order proceedings and protect against the incitement of genocide. It has been the result of a very thorough pre-iterative consultation.

As long ago as June this year, the Attorney-General announced the foreshadowed changes for introduction. They were approved via the National Security Committee of Cabinet in June. In August, the New South Wales Premier, Mr Baird, wrote to the former Prime Minister, Mr Abbott, proposing further changes, and draft provisions were circulated to states and territories in early September. Shortly after that, Mr Abbott responded positively to the New South Wales Premier's letter, stating that some of the issues were already dealt with in the proposed bill and other issues would be pursued as a matter of priority through the Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee. On 9 September and 9 October, the Commonwealth hosted videoconferences with states and territories to continue this consultation.

As honourable members know, later this week there will be a meeting here in Canberra of the leading officials of security, police and counter-terrorism agencies to further coordinate our response. So there is complete cooperation and consultation between all of the relevant agencies in Australia, and I thank all of the state and territory agencies for their collaboration and help with the Commonwealth in this vital matter of national security.

**Trade with China**

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (14:05): My question is to the Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the government now work with Labor to legislate labour market testing for
projects over $150 million, ensuring jobs are advertised locally first; introduce safeguards which ensure Australian wages are not undercut and overseas workers are not exploited; and implement safeguards which ensure 457 visa holders meet state and territory licensing requirements?

Government members interjecting—

Ms Butler interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my right will cease interjecting.

Ms Butler interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Griffith!

Mr ROBB (Goldstein—Minister for Trade and Investment) (14:06): I thank the member for his question. We have said in response, as the Prime Minister confirmed in answer to the first question, that, for the first time, we have seen something written down that seeks to explain, in some way—

Ms Butler interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Griffith is warned!

Mr ROBB: the agitation, the abuse, the accusations and the sound bites that have been characteristic of the debate on the other side of the parliament.

Ms Butler interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Griffith has been warned!

Mr ROBB: I do note—and the member who asked this question should have known this—that his own party has accepted that nothing in the agreement, nothing in the MOU and nothing in the side letters will change, and we thank you for that. When you get on top of these issues you will do a better job of framing some of the questions that are put to this House.

Ms MacTiernan interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Perth.

Mr ROBB: The principal criteria by which we will judge the measures that are being put forward are, firstly, that we will not entertain anything that discriminates against the Chinese. This is a non-discriminatory migration policy we run, yet the—

Mr Bowen interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McMahon.

Mr ROBB: campaign run by the CFMEU—

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs.

Mr ROBB: runs counter to our policy in this regard.

Mr Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McEwen will cease interjecting.

Mr Hunt interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Minister for the Environment will cease interjecting.

Mr Husic interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley is delaying proceedings.

Mr Burke: Mr Speaker, a point of order on direct relevance: the question was not about their foreign investment changes.

The SPEAKER: The minister is in order. The minister has the call. The minister is on the same policy topic.

Mr ROBB: Another confused comment from the other side of the parliament! The second principle we will apply in assessing the material that is being put forward today is that we will reject it if it contravenes the firm commitments we have made in this free trade agreement. That is the answer to your question. What we are seeing from those opposite, which we are happy to entertain and to look at, is the question of whether we can provide any more clarity or any more comfort around an agreement that is rolled gold and rock solid.

### Trade

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (14:09): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister outline the importance of free trade to ensuring a vibrant economic future for Australia? What are the advantages to the Australian economy of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and other free trade agreements?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:09): I thank the honourable member for her question. The future of our country, the destiny of our country, lies in us being a successful trading nation. We are a great trading nation today. We are engaged with the whole world. We have better capacity to be engaged with the world than almost any other nation, because we are also the most successful multicultural nation in the world. There is no nation better equipped—whether it is via the composition of its people, its education or its attitudes to innovation—to grasp the opportunities of the global economy than ours is. But obviously trade barriers had existed. What the government has done—what trade minister Andrew Robb has done—is open up one door after another in a remarkable series of achievements: Korea, Japan and China, and now the Trans-Pacific Partnership. It alone is the single largest multilateral trade agreement for over 20 years. Everyone had given up on multilateral agreements. They thought they were all too hard. But, through perseverance, 12 nations have managed to do it.

Our future—of agility, of innovation, of technology, of competitiveness—depends on us having access to these great markets. If you consider China alone, in the lifetimes of everyone in this House—everyone, including the member for Longman!—China was a small part of the global economy. If you go back 40 years, China was barely participating in the global economy. If it is not already the largest it shortly will be the largest single economy in the world, and we now have the highest-level access to it of any comparable country. China is already our largest services market. Thanks to the work of the trade minister, our services exporters are getting the best access that China has given any country. They stand to benefit as every element of the Chinese economy evolves. China, as honourable members know, is an economy that was driven by investment, sanctioned by government and encouraged by government in every way. It is moving to a more conventional mix, where consumption will play a larger part—

Mr Perrett interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Moreton.
Mr TURNBULL: and where services will play a larger part. We have much more to sell to China than the makings of steel: education, health care, design services, agriculture—right across the board. That market is open to Australia through the ChAFTA, if we can secure its passage through this parliament. That door is open, unless the Labor Party decides to keep it shut. Now is the time for Labor to abandon its fear campaign against China.

Budget

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:13): My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, how much has revenue fallen between the coalition's 2014 and 2015 budgets?

Mr Husic interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley will cease interjecting.

Mr Champion interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield is warned.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:13): The government is committed to strong economic management, and strong management of our budget. In dealing with the challenges we face from time to time—

Mr Dreyfus interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs.

Mr MORRISON: there are measures that have to be added to the budget which I know those on the opposite side of the House would agree have to be included in our forward estimates and our budget expenditure for this year. And they would know that since the last budget—

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney.

Mr MORRISON: which was forecasting a rate of expenditure of 25.9 per cent of GDP, the budget now includes—has had added to it—Roads to Recovery funding, the Syrian humanitarian crisis response and also the delay of the higher education reforms.

Ms Macklin interjecting—

The SPEAKER: As soon as the member for Jagajaga is ready I will recognise the member for Watson.

Mr Burke: Just to give him a chance to look it up.

The SPEAKER: Is there a point of order?

Mr Burke: Yes, there is.

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr Burke: The point of order is on direct relevance. 'Revenue' is about the money coming in, 'expenditure' is—

The SPEAKER: The member for Watson will resume his seat. The member for Watson does not have the call. The Treasurer has the call.

Mr MORRISON: The opportunity I was giving those opposite was this: to put the budget into balance you need to ensure that your expenditure—are you with me?—is less than your revenue.
Opposition members interjecting—

Mr MORRISON: Those opposite believe the way to balance the budget is to increase your revenue so that it is higher than your expenditure. That is why those opposite, when they have the opportunity, are constantly chasing higher expenditure with higher taxes.

Revenue this year is forecast to be 24 per cent of GDP, and currently expenditure as a percentage of GDP is higher than that. But what we are doing with our budget is we are increasing the strength of the budget by 0.5 per cent of GDP every single year. That is the pathway to surplus: ensuring that you get your expenditure under control and that your revenue grows with the strength of the economy, not by sucking more taxes out of Australians taxpayers' pockets to ensure that they can chase the ever increasing spending spiral of those opposite. This government is focused on getting expenditure under control and ensuring that we grow receipts based on a strong economy, not on the taxing appetites of those opposite.

The SPEAKER: The member for McMahon.

Mr Bowen: Given the Treasurer did not know the answer, I seek leave to table the answer, which is $52 billion from the budget—the government's document. I seek leave to table it.

Mr Pyne interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will cease interjecting. I have made it clear before that members are not going to table documents that are already documents of the parliament.

Health

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (14:16): Mr Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, representatives from three Victorian multipurpose health services are currently visiting the parliament, discussing the viability of services, negative implications of changing funding arrangements and the need for a review of funding arrangements. Minister, can you please commit to the House that a review of funding will take place in order to ensure that we have long-term sustainability and efficient, effective and targeted delivery of health services to our regional communities?

Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for Health, Minister for Sport and Minister for Aged Care) (14:17): I thank the member for Indi for her question, which I understand focuses on the delivery of health through multipurpose services in her electorate of Indi. I know she has several in Corryong, in Bright and in Mount Beauty and in parts of the Alpine Shire. I can reassure the member for Indi that the review of which she speaks is well and truly underway. Members of the House, particularly rural and regional members, may know that the MPS model is very good—it is tried and true—but it has not been reinvented since 1993 and it does need reviewing. It provides a combination of both acute and subacute services with aged-care residential services in small regional towns. It is a model that has stood the test of time, but it is appropriate, given our changes to aged-care funding, that we review this, and the independent Aged Care Financing Authority is doing exactly that.

As rural and regional members of the House will understand, aged care does not look the same in every part of Australia. It is vital that we look after our most important frail and elderly in rural and regional Australia and that we do not do it in exactly the same way as we might in the big cities. It is vital that we understand that for people who have grown up and spent their whole lives in small country towns, a move of even 20 or 30 kilometres down the...
road can be a move too far. So I am very committed to making sure that as we keep older
Australians healthier and happier in their homes for longer—remembering that only five per
cent actually do go into residential aged care—we also provide models that work well for
individuals and empower them with the choice to determine their own destiny. That is totally
appropriate, whether you happen to be 23 or 93.

We recognise that the supports and policy that the federal government puts in place need to
capture the wants and needs of our older Australians. I look forward to the independent
authority that I spoke about doing the review and picking up on the interests of not just the
member for Indi but all members in this place.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Just before I call the member for Braddon, it is my pleasure to inform
the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon former federal member of
parliament and a former federal member for Deakin, Mr Mike Symon. Welcome back. Also,
we have former state leader of the opposition and former member of the New South Wales
parliament, the Hon. Kerry Chikarovski. Welcome to the parliament.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Budget

Mr WHITELEY (Braddon—Government Whip) (14:20): My question is to the
Treasurer. Will the Treasurer explain to the House how the government is promoting
economic growth through a stronger budget, and are there any threats to responsible fiscal
policy?

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will cease interjecting.

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney is now warned.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Minister for Social Services) (14:20): I thank the member for
Braddon for his question, because he knows that the way to have a strong budget is to have a
strong economy. And the way to have a strong economy is to focus on policies that promote
growth. We on this side of the House know that to promote growth you need a tax system that
encourages people to work, save and invest, and to ensure that they are making the decisions
that they want to make so that we can grow revenue based on stronger economic growth.

Those opposite have a different approach. They believe the way to have strong economic
management—and it is a fallacy—is that you raise taxes and pull more out of people's pockets
to chase higher and higher levels of expenditure, which is what those opposite seek to do. We
believe that strong economic management is the road to building a stronger economy because
it inspires confidence in both consumers and businesses.

Ms Butler interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Griffith that she has been warned twice.

Mr MORRISON: We note the figures that have come out today in terms of the
improvement in business and consumer confidence. These figures will move around and they

CHAMBER
will go up and down, and the way you earn confidence is to have the policies that backup that confidence. What we know as a government is that if we continue to focus on the path that we have been on—that is, to put in place the savings measures and to control the expenditure in the way we have and grow the economy—then we can return the budget to balance over time. I particularly want to commend the member for North Sydney, the former Treasurer, for the excellent work that he has done in building the strong foundation for what we—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr MORRISON: continue to work on as we move the budget towards surplus over time.

We have reduced real growth and government expenditure from 3.6 per cent on average per annum, as it was under Labor, down to 1.5 per cent on average in the 2015-16 budget and the forward estimates. We have implemented a total of 332 budget measures out of a total of 407. We have delivered $9.4 billion in expenditure savings from the 2015-16 budget already. Overall, since the 2013-14 MYEFO, some $85 billion worth of budget improvement measures, which includes over $64 billion in savings, has been delivered to ensure a stronger budget.

What have those opposite learned from this process and from their time of excessive spending? They currently have $57 billion worth of commitments and failures to support savings. They add up like this: $3.6 billion in budget measures that they themselves put forward that they refuse to support today, $14.7 billion in budget repair measures that we have put forward that they refuse to support, $33½ billion in spending measures that they want to see restored from savings that we have put forward, $10.3 billion in promises they have made since the 2015-16 budget and $3.8 billion in new and increased taxes. What have they learned in terms of savings to pay for that $57 billion-odd? There is $1.3 billion in taxes, but then they— (Time expired)

Economy

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:23): My question is to the Treasurer. Based on real disposable income per person, how much have Australian living standards fallen since the last election?

Mr Dutton: I’ll tell you what, they would have fallen under Labor.

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Immigration will cease interjecting.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:24): I thank the member for the question. Real Australian living standards going forward are going to depend on something incredibly important. Australians, as they sit at home today, are concerned about their jobs,—

Ms Macklin interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Jagajaga will cease interjecting

Mr MORRISON: their family income and their family circumstances. As they are thinking about these issues, they are looking overseas, they are looking at volatility, they are looking at uncertainty and changes. What we are doing on this side of the House—

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will cease interjecting.
Mr MORRISON: We are looking to ensure that we back Australians to make the transition that they know they need to make. As an economy, we need to make this transition to ensure that they have prosperity in the future.

Ms Macklin interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Jagajaga is now warned.

Mr MORRISON: Some of those opposite have mentioned wages. The way for Australians to earn higher real wages is to ensure that we have productivity gains in the economy. That is how you get higher wages. Higher wages were achieved under the Howard-Costello government because they ensured that they put in place policies—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat. The member for Sydney has a point of order.

Ms Plibersek: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order relating to relevance. If the Treasurer does not know, he should just sit down.

Government members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my right! The Leader of the House and the Minister for the Environment will cease interjecting.

Mr MORRISON: I am addressing the issue of the real living standards of Australians. Those opposite might want to play these games—and I know they will—but Australians want to know the plan to go forward, the plan to ensure that Australians can have confidence. We have seen again in the surveys released today that they have increasing confidence, particularly in relation to employment conditions amongst business going forward. The reason they have that confidence is that they can see in us a government that wants to get the budget into balance and exercise the sort of discipline that is necessary to achieve that goal, a government that is interested in making changes to the tax system that is going to help people make the decisions that they want to make about their economic future. They know that they have got a government that is not going to try to scare them out of prosperity, as those opposite have demonstrated.

What we have from those opposite are those who are happy to have someone that they can tell people to blame. They are happy to have someone that they can tell people to be afraid of. But that side of the House will give no-one anything to believe in. On this side of the House, we are focused on improving the real living standards of Australians through higher economic growth and through better tax policies that reward people who work, save and invest and that can grow the income capacity of this country. You have got no better example of that than through the free trade agreements.

Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement

Mr VARVARIS (Barton) (14:27): My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister outline what benefits the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement will bring to Australia's health sector?

Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for Health, Minister for Sport and Minister for Aged Care) (14:27): I thank the member for Barton for his question and note that close to him are many innovative Australian manufacturers of medicines that will make a difference to people's lives both now and into the future. Australia has a strong reputation for its world-leading
We have enormous potential to export these across the Asia-Pacific. In an increasingly affluent South-East Asia, there are partnerships and opportunities that this TPP will unlock in a way that we never could have anticipated. We must recognise the work of the trade minister in, I think, a 48-hour marathon with no sleep in Atlanta. The Prime Minister and I were on late-night—their time—phone hook-ups talking about health issues, making sure that Australia gets and has got the best possible deal for our industries.

This agreement will do things. It will be good for jobs. It will eliminate remaining duties on Australian exports of medical instruments and devices to TPP parties, and this alone was worth in excess of a billion dollars in 2014. It will also eliminate all remaining duties on Australian pharmaceutical exports, which were valued at around $694 million in 2014. We have got commitments from all of the signatory parties that will allow our suppliers to bid for government contracts for pharmaceutical and medical equipment amongst the TPP parties. The rapid growth and affluence of South-East Asia presents real opportunities.

That is what the TPP will do. I want to reassure members and the community of what it will not do. It will not push up the cost of medicines. It will not lead to price increases for medicines on the PBS. As the trade minister said during negotiations, this is absolutely a red-line issue for us. It does not change Australia’s existing five years of data protection for biologics or any other part of our health system. We know that with the emerging opportunities that come both for health and for manufacturing in biosimilars—the generic version of biologic medicines—it was absolutely important that we maintained five years of data protection in concert with our world-class patent system, which provides market protection for biologics that is second to none in the world.

This TPP builds on our government’s commitment to improved access to medicines on the PBS, a system of which we are rightly proud and which is absolutely the gold standard. It is time for Labor to get over its natural suspicion of free trade agreements, its inability to understand the value that they add and its old-fashioned rhetoric, which is completely unhelpful.

**Economy**

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:30): My question is to the Treasurer. The former Treasury Secretary, Ken Henry, recently said on the ABC’s 7.30 that more than half of the budget deterioration is because of falling revenue. Does the Treasurer agree with Dr Henry’s assessment?

Ms Plibersek: Yes or no.

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Sydney she has been warned.

Mr Bowen interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McMahon has asked his question. He will cease interjecting.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:31): Those opposite are asking me questions about revenue. I know those opposite are very interested in the revenue figure. They are terribly interested in the revenue figure, because those opposite believe that the way you strengthen the budget, the way you balance the budget, is you increase taxes. That is what they think over there. They think the way to address the country's budget challenges is to pull
more money out of the pockets of Australian taxpayers, that you need to tax businesses more, that you need to tax the savings of people more. They think the answer to the nation's economic problems is to increase taxes.

Even given the revenue position that we have today, at around 24 per cent, if the level of expenditure to GDP was exactly what those opposite inherited when they went into government, which was 23.1 per cent, we would be in surplus today—if they simply kept expenditure to GDP at the level they inherited. Even on the reduced revenue figures as a percentage of GDP today, we would be in surplus. That is where we would be. So those opposite I know are very focused on the revenue issue.

When we think about revenue, we think about how we are going to grow the economy, how we are going to increase the amount of money that Australians can earn and that businesses can earn. The way we do that is through the free trade agreements, which will ensure we are going to earn more as a country. Those opposite had the best commodity prices of all time. They had the best of all time, but they drove our budget into dire deficit and they put this country into a debt legacy that will take a generation to pay off. The reason they did that is that they always believe that you can spend taxpayers' money like there is no tomorrow, because you can always raise taxes to pay it off.

Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement

Mrs GRIGGS (Solomon) (14:33): My question is to the Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the minister please advise the House of what new markets will be opened up to our exporters as a result of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement?

Mr ROBB (Goldstein—Minister for Trade and Investment) (14:33): I thank the member for her question. The member, of course, is a part of the very dynamic northern Australia. That part of Australia is going to require all sorts of new opportunities in new markets as well as drawing on the traditional, as that part of our country is opened up to its potential. The TPP, as has been said, has transformational promise for our goods, exporters, service providers and for investment into places like the Northern Territory. It will drive growth. It will drive jobs. It will drive innovation.

In 2014, one-third of all of our goods and services that were exported, worth $109 billion, went to the 12 TPP countries. One noteworthy aspect is, in fact, that three of the TPP countries—notably, Mexico, Canada and Peru—are economies with which we do not have existing bilateral trade agreements at the moment. This means that prohibitive tariffs on our exports into these economies, including the emerging Mexican economy with its population of 122 million people, will be eliminated across a range of areas. For example, tariffs on Australia's premium quality wine will be eliminated by Canada, by Mexico and by Peru; immediately, in the case of Canada. Canada is already a $170 million market for our wine but with still enormous potential. Our wine is very popular there but is discriminated against in certain ways. The TPP will provide a platform for much greater growth.

Rice tariffs into Mexico will also be eliminated, while our dairy producers have also gained new preferential access into Mexico and the highly protected Canadian market. Tariffs on our premium seafood will also be eliminated into Canada, Peru and Mexico, while tariffs on our iron ore, copper and nickel will be immediately eliminated into Peru. Tariffs on our iron ore and steel products into Canada will also be eliminated, while Mexico has afforded our $90
billion mining services sector new opportunities that will stem from the historic liberalisation of its energy sector. A range of other services will also gain access to these markets—hospitality and tourism and these massive growth areas for Australia will get access into these new markets.

So while the transformation agreement involves 12 countries, it also affords new levels of market access into countries where we did not have existing trade and investment agreements. The TPP is part of this government's plan to help diversify our economy in this critical post-mining boom period. Combined with our landmark trifecta of deals with Korea, Japan and China, it will help ensure that the future for Australia's exporters can be spectacular.

Superannuation

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:36): My question is to the Prime Minister. Thirty-eight per cent of total superannuation tax concessions go to the top 10 per cent of income earners. Prime Minister, is this fair and will the Prime Minister join with Labor and commit to our plan for a fair and sustainable superannuation system, a plan that will provide $14 billion for the budget over the next 10 years?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:37): I thank the honourable member for his question. The superannuation system is a vital part of our economy. We have, through the superannuation system, the ability for millions of Australians to plan for their retirement and ensure that they have the savings to deal with it. He is right in saying that there are very substantial tax concessions associated with superannuation. All of this is connected with the taxation system itself, the taxation on income and other elements in the economy, and it is connected with the transfer system. All of these matters are under consideration by the government. I have noted the opposition's proposals and we are, clearly, going to consider those proposals and any other proposals that are made as we review the situation. Can I just say to him, superannuation is critically important.

Any changes proposed for superannuation that would affect the superannuation system are changes that we would take to an election. We are not dealing with minor matters, here. These are matters of great import, in terms of the future of our economy and in ensuring that every aspect of our tax, transfer and savings system is calculated both to ensure that people have the retirement savings they need and to ensure that we have all of the right incentives to work, to save and to invest.

Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement

Mr PITT (Hinkler) (14:38): My question is to the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. Will the minister update the House on how the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement will help Australian farmers and exporters capitalise on the opportunities created by the coalition government's free trade agreements with Korea, Japan and China?

Ms Rishworth interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Kingston will cease interjecting!

Mr JOYCE (New England—Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources) (14:39): I thank the honourable member for his question. A person who has grown up around Bundaberg, who went to Kepnock State High School, whose family has cane farms in the areas, as one person who absolutely has an interest in this TPP going through—it is an area where, no matter where you go in the Hinkler area, there are benefits to this.
We have seen, through this agreement, people such as Craig Van Rooyen of Sweet Sensations Farm, at Bundaberg, state that he is very excited about the TPP and the opportunities it will bring for his business. He is also doing some very interesting work on non-lethal pest management. Bundaberg Brewed Drinks are currently going through issues about how they can be benefactors of the TPP after being substantial benefactors of the China free trade agreement.

We have seen, also, new markets, because the deal that this government has done means that people in the fishing industry around Hervey Bay have new markets that they will see in Canada, Peru and Mexico and this brings about great opportunities for expansion. In horticulture, in heavy vegetables, such as pumpkins, and a whole range of horticultural produce in that area, we will see all tariffs to Canada eliminated on entry into the TPP. Pork tariffs into Mexico will be eliminated on entry, and to Malaysia, over 15 years and with pork being the most consumed meat in the world this is incredibly important for Australia and for all over. For wine there is elimination of all tariffs into Canada. This market is worth $174 million to us, so it is a great new expansion of that market. There is elimination over 11 years of tariffs into Vietnam. There is elimination of tariffs of quality wine into Malaysia over three years and bulk wine over 10 years.

Everything this government is doing is working to a vision, a plan, and then delivering. We have a vision for a greater return through the farm gate. We have a plan by all the free trade agreements and new live-animal destinations and all the work that we are doing to make sure that happens, and by the white paper to make sure that people reinvest back on their farms. We are delivering on it. We are delivering on the free trade agreements. We are delivering on the white paper. We are making sure that people on the land are better off because of this government.

The opposition have been asking questions about revenue, and the answer is quite obvious: to get better revenue you have to earn it. You have to go forward and find new markets. And who is the greatest obstacle to us in getting better revenue in this country? Where does the greatest obstacle lie? Straight opposite us. The Chinese free trade agreement, they do not believe in it. They do not believe in the solution to their own problems.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:42): I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon a parliamentary delegation from Kenya. On behalf of the House, I extend to you a very warm welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Water

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (14:42): My question is also to the minister for agriculture. Minister, are you now responsible for water buybacks?

Mr JOYCE (New England—Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources) (14:42): That is a rather profound question! When I went to Government House they swore me in as the minister for water resources as well as agriculture. It is incredible. Any more questions like this and we will be here for another five minutes.
Mr Fitzgibbon: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the administrative arrangements, which do suggest that the minister has just misled the House.

Leave not granted.

Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement

Mr WILLIAMS (Hindmarsh) (14:43): My question is to the Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science. Will the minister outline to the House how the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement will assist Australian industry—in particular, the advanced manufacturing sector—and in accessing new markets more easily?

Mr Husic interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley is warned!

Mr WILLIAMS: How will agreements, like this one, benefit innovative Australian businesses, in my electorate of Hindmarsh and across Australia, to boost their exports and help create jobs and grow the economy?

Mr Perrett interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Moreton is warned!

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science) (14:43): I thank the member for Hindmarsh for his question because he, like me and the rest of the government, is focused on trying to grow the economy, trying to increase the size of the pie, which will lift revenues for the Australian government and take care of a lot of the problems left to us, by the previous government, two years ago. The commitment that we have on this side of the House to free trade—to things like the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement, free trade agreements with South Korea and Japan—are all designed to create jobs and grow the economy. Labor, on the other hand, believe that they can frighten the Australian people back into poverty and win an election based on that fear campaign. We, on this side of the House, have an optimistic view of the Australian economy and the future for our country, and that is an optimism shared by the Australian public.

I was only recently talking to the member for Hindmarsh about a very successful advanced manufacturer in his electorate called Philmac. Philmac is a business that makes advanced designs and manufactured fittings and valves for the movement and control of water. It is a very old business, but it puts a lot of money and effort into research and development. It started in 1929, and it is constantly innovating and changing its business model and products. It holds many world patents and has been extremely successful exporting to 30 countries. The TPP—the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement—is going to advantage firms just like Philmac in Hindmarsh, and just like Carbon Revolution in the member for Corangamite's electorate in Geelong. It will do this by opening up to Australia access to markets to 40 per cent of the world's economy. It will reduce tariffs on $12.3 billion of dutiable exports to Trans-Pacific Partnership countries—they will be eliminated. That is 98 per cent of all tariffs in member countries being eliminated. It will reduce administrative costs for Australian businesses in the future as they will trade under one set of rules through the TPP where previously Australian businesses had to deal with a number of different bilateral rules as part of different free trade agreements.
Mr Husic interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley has been warned.

Mr PYNE: It will support the establishment of regional supply chains, which are very important to businesses in saving costs and increasing productivity. Through a number of these measures, we are ensuring that through the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement we are having a laser-like focus on jobs and growth.

Opposition members: Laser!

The SPEAKER: Members on my left!

Mr PYNE: While Labor, on the other hand, are focused on fear, we are focused — laser-like — on jobs and growth, and the reward of this focus will be a growing economy and an Australian population that shares our optimism rather than Labor's pessimism about the future.

Economy

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:47): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to his previous answer where he repeated the mantra to 'work, save and invest'. Is the Prime Minister aware that this is a direct quote from the 1992 document *Fightback!*; and that the mantra to 'work, save and invest' is part of the economic plan that includes the introduction of a GST on food?

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Corangamite! Members on my left will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:47): Everybody in this House, and everybody in this country believes that our tax system and our saving system should be designed so as to encourage people to work, to save and to invest. Who would argue with that?

Government members: Labor!

Mr TURNBULL: The answer is — my colleagues assist me — Labor. The member for Watson, instead of spending his time actually coming up with some policies that would encourage greater enterprise, greater entrepreneurship, higher savings, better investment, greater business confidence and innovation — instead of coming up with some ideas that would contribute to the public policy debate — what does this poor wretch do? What does he do? He goes back into the library digging through the old records and ploughing through *Fightback!* I have no criticism of it at all, but I would just say: this is ancient history. I can tell you that on our side of the House, we are not spending any time going through the policies of the Labor Party from 1993. We are concerned with the issues of 2015 and 2030. We are concerned with building the foundations for our future prosperity, not ploughing through political archaeology. Really! The member for Watson should spend his time more fruitfully than this. If he has no imagination at all; if he is so frightened of the future and so anxious about all the things that lie ahead that he is only comfortable living 20 years ago—

Ms Butler: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order under standing order 90. The Prime Minister knows better than to reflect on members in that way.

CHAMBER
The Speaker: The Prime Minister is in order. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr Turnbull: There is clearly a great career as an archivist awaiting the member for Watson. He can go back further. There are probably some old policies from the United Australia Party he can dig into! Stanley Melbourne Bruce no doubt had some interesting policies! He can go back to the foundation of the AWU and William Guthrie Spence! Perhaps that is the future for the member for Watson—as a political historian trundling through the dusty, cobwebbed libraries of the past, rather than focusing on the challenges of the future.

Mr Griffin interjecting—

The Speaker: The member for Bruce will cease interjecting! The member for Bruce knows I recognise his voice.

Infrastructure: Pacific Highway

Mr Hogan (Page) (14:51): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development. Would the minister update the House on the progress being made to duplicate the Pacific Highway? What is the government doing to ensure that it is completed by the end of this decade?

Mr Truss (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (14:51): I thank the honourable member for Page for his question. I know, as he does, and as do all the members for northern New South Wales, how important it is for the duplication project of the Pacific Highway to be completed. That is why we have committed $5.64 billion to complete the duplication of the Pacific Highway by the end of this decade. Indeed, the last federal budget included all of the money that is required to complete this project.

It is well and truly underway. Construction has begun on the last 155-kilometre section from Woolgoolga to Ballina in honourable member's electorate. That project is headquartered in Grafton in his electorate. There is, therefore, real progress occurring, and we are determined to achieve our objective of completing this by the end of the decade.

I noticed recently that Labor have endorsed the former member for Page as their candidate at the next election. I cannot understand why they would do that in view of the fact that she stood idly by while Labor slowed down the construction of the Pacific Highway project and skipped the electorate of Page during the construction phase.

Mr Albanese: It's absolute crap!

The Speaker: The member for Grayndler is warned!

Mr Truss: It took a change of government to get this project well and truly underway in the electorate of Page.

I was also surprised when I read that the Leader of the Opposition had included amongst his top 10 projects for infrastructure for the Labor Party to fast-track the Pacific and Bruce Highway packages. Fast-track—when they were in government, they slowed it down! Their fifty-fifty funding proposal would have meant that the project would not have been completed until about 2028, another whole decade away, whereas we will be completing it in the term of the current forward estimates. The reality is that Labor intended to slow this project down, and their policy at the last election was to slow it down. Now we have the hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition putting it amongst his top priorities to fast-track it. He has already
missed the boat. All of the money is provided and work is underway on the last major stretch. We will deliver this project by the end of the decade. For Labor it would have taken another decade.

Workplace Relations

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:54): My question is to the Prime Minister. Yesterday, when asked about the future of penalty rates, the Prime Minister kindly explained that businesses can currently alter penalty rates in exchange for negotiating increases in workers' overall pay. Given that the Prime Minister recognises that businesses and workers are already able to achieve flexibility within the current workplace system, why is the Prime Minister persisting with a Productivity Commission review of penalty rates? What exactly does the Prime Minister plan to change about the current system?

Mrs Griggs: And what about the netballers?

The SPEAKER: The member for Solomon will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:54): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and I appreciate his keen interest in penalty rates. But it is not, perhaps, as keen an interest as that of the low-paid cleaners who had the misfortune of being members of his union and who worked for Cleanevent when the honourable member, then the national secretary of the AWU, entered into an agreement with the employer which removed all of the penalty rates—

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney is warned for the last time!

Mr TURNBULL: for the low-paid cleaners with no compensation, so we have heard. Sorry, Mr Speaker, I must correct myself. There was some compensation. Cleanevent paid the AWU $25,000 a year.

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will leave under order 94(a) immediately.

Mr TURNBULL: It also provided a list of the employees' names to the AWU to add to its membership list.

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Sydney will leave under order 94(a).

the member for Sydney then left the chamber.

Mr TURNBULL: Penalty rates are a matter for the Fair Work Commission to determine.

Ms Butler interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Griffith will leave under order 94(a).

the member for Griffith then left the chamber.

Mr TURNBULL: Indeed, the only time in Australian history when penalty rates have been lowered was as a result of the review of the Fair Work laws which Labor started while the honourable member, the opposition leader, was the workplace relations minister.

Mr Brendan O'Connor interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Gorton is warned!
The Productivity Commission is currently examining this issue as part of its inquiry into the workplace relations framework. If you accept the premise of the Leader of the Opposition's question, penalty rates are apparently something that no-one can ever consider. This is a sort of a no-man's-land—you cannot go there, stay away! This is at odds with what his colleagues have been doing. I have mentioned his own not-especially-distinguished record on penalty rates. Consider the member for Watson and his former union, the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association trade union—

Ms Chesters interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Bendigo that she has been warned.

Mr TURNBULL: It has regularly negotiated changes to penalty rates, notably, for example, in the Woolworths enterprise agreement, which does not generally require the employer to pay penalty rates for weekend work. The SDA have done a deal. I note also some of the remarks on the record. I mentioned the member for Port Adelaide yesterday, but the member for Gorton was so convinced of the correctness of his attack just before Question Time he could not stop laughing while he was speaking. He could see how ridiculous his remarks were.

Mr Champion: Get your facts right!

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield is warned!

Mr TURNBULL: He said in January this year, 'I am not suggesting for a moment that there aren't provisions, including penalty rates, that shouldn't be looked at.' Really, the Leader of the Opposition has got to do better than this.

Taxation

Mrs McNAMARA (Dobell) (14:58): My question is to the Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer. Will the minister explain what actions the government is taking to ensure that multinational companies do not avoid paying tax?

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer) (14:58): Thank you very much to the member for Dobell for her very important question. Every Australian taxpayer needs to be confident that multinational companies that operate in Australia and make money in Australia pay tax in Australia. The Australian government is leading the fight against multinational tax avoidance. During our presidency of the G20 last year and in partnership with the OECD, Joe Hockey as Treasurer led this work and deserves our praise and our thanks. He understood that tax avoidance strategies exploit gaps and mismatches in the international tax system, which has struggled to keep pace with the changing times, such as now having globally integrated supply systems, and the disruptive nature of internet and digital technologies.

In the last fortnight the government has introduced multinational tax avoidance legislation to ensure that those companies that are making sales in Australia but booking revenue offshore are subject to tax in Australia. We are doubling penalties for those who choose to break the rules through transfer-pricing and profit-shifting schemes, and we are implementing the OECD country-by-country reporting to give the Australian Taxation Office the ability to
assess transfer-pricing risk. We have also taken action on harmful tax practices and pursued rules to prevent tax treaty abuses. We have asked the Board of Taxation to consult on the OECD recommendations to combat hybrid mismatches. Before this, though, the government had previously passed legislation to tighten thin capitalisation rules to stop multinationals from claiming excessive tax deductions and to close other tax loopholes.

The government has provided $87 million over three years to review companies that have undertaken international restructures or significant related-party cross-transactions. This has already yielded significant results, with the ATO raising $400 million in tax liabilities thus far. Base erosion and profit-shifting activities give large multinational businesses an improper advantage over local small business and family businesses, who then have to shoulder more of the tax burden. Government activities are restoring confidence in the integrity of our taxation system through these actions, in which we are leading the world.

Workplace Relations

Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR (Gorton) (15:01): My question is to the Prime Minister. Laetitia Richardson works in a cafe and is paid an award wage. She is a single mum and sole provider for a 12-year-old daughter. She has missed birthdays, Christmas, school concerts, dance recitals and netball games, but says, ‘By working and missing some things, I can afford the dance lesson once a week, the netball fees and costs. I can afford fresh fruit and vegetables instead of frozen. Take away penalty rates, and those little extras are gone.’ What exactly is the Prime Minister's plan for Laetitia's penalty rates?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (15:01): The honourable member did not mention whether Laetitia was a member of his union. It seems unlikely, given her occupation, that she would be in the CFMEU. I remind the honourable member that he has identified that provisions, including penalty rates, can be looked at in the context of industrial agreements.

Ms Chesters interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Bendigo will leave under 94(a).

The member for Bendigo then left the chamber.

Mr TURNBULL: The simple fact of life which the honourable member overlooks in his efforts to conjure up some kind of scare campaign is that, firstly, penalty rates are a matter for the Fair Work Commission; and, secondly, the union movement—the industrial wing of the labour movement—regularly negotiates changes to award penalty rates as part of industrial agreements. One assumes that that is done because it is felt that it is, overall, a better deal for the employees and, presumably, for the employers. So the government has no plans to change Laetitia's penalty rates. There are no plans at all. But the flexibility in penalty rates is something that is happening in the marketplace, it is something that the Fair Work Commission has certainly effected in some cases in the past and it is something that practically every member—I can go on. I mentioned the member for Gorton; what about the member for Fraser? When asked whether there was any room for restructuring penalty rates, he said, 'I am always up for an evidence-based discussion.'

I can give another example. McDonald's employees are not entitled to penalty rates for working on weekends, but their enterprise agreements offer higher base rates of pay. The adult entry-level staff members who cook and serve meals have a minimum weekly award
wage of $772.51 in New South Wales, compared to $721.50 under the fast food industry award, and so forth.

So this is a completely baseless scare campaign. Firstly, the opposition is trying to create the impression that the labour movement has never contemplated changes to penalty rates or variations to award-based penalty rates, whereas it always has done and no doubt always will do in the future; and, secondly, it is trying to create a fiction that the government is in a position to change penalty rates, which it is not. That is a matter for the Fair Work Commission. So, really, unless the honourable member wants to keep on hitting his head against this pointless claim, he should find a new scare campaign to run, because this one has no legs.

Mental Health

Mr EWEN JONES (Herbert—Government Whip) (15:05): My question is to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs. Will the minister update the House on what the government is doing to support the mental health needs of our veterans, including those who have served in the Australian Army's 3rd Brigade at RAAF Base Townsville, in my electorate of Herbert?

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister for Human Services and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC) (15:05): I thank the Government Whip, the honourable member for Herbert, for his question. He, of course, represents 6,000 of our fighting men and women up there in Townsville, including 4,200 veterans and 1,300 dependents of veterans up in the north.

Saturday was World Mental Health Day and the start of Veterans' Health Week, which I launched in Perth at the RSL conference. It was good to see the member for Perth representing those opposite there at Government House as well. Veterans' Health Week will see 17,000 of our veterans attending 220 events around Australia. From yoga on Bondi Beach right through to golf in many members' electorates and everything in between, this will be the largest event in its history for veterans gathering for Veterans' Health Week.

To mark World Mental Health Day and the start of Veterans' Health Week, the government released two documents in Perth that set out the strategic framework for where government is going to support ex-service men and women to improve their mental and social health. The government and, I know, all members here are committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of our veteran community, including mental health. Firstly, the Social Health Strategy 2015-2023 for the Veteran and Ex-Service Community was released, which looks particularly at the health challenges that former ADF personnel face after transferring into civilian life. It is designed with five major strategic objectives: improving knowledge and awareness of good social health, building the evidence base, increasing opportunities for participation, increasing engagement in decision making, and improving healthy behaviours and supporting healthy places. Simply put, it is about initiatives keeping people connected with friends, families and communities, as this helps prevent mental illness.

The second plan the government released on the weekend was the Mental and Social Health Action Plan for the next two years, which outlines the key activities the government will be focused on to support veteran mental health. I am pleased to report to the House that many of the activities are well under way. The government has already expanded access to veterans and veterans' families counselling services. We have expanded arrangements under
which DVA will pay for treatment of certain mental health conditions for many ex-service personnel whatever the cause. We have developed online mental health tools and smart phone apps to support our younger cohort of veterans, and online and training information resources to better support our professionals to provide services to our veterans. We have introduced a $10 million casemix coordination initiative to support our vets with complex needs, and we are making sure that defence personnel are better supported with information as they transition out.

These initiatives will make a real difference and I am sure the House joins me in wishing our veterans well as they deal with sometimes difficult mental health issues. I encourage all veterans and all members to get involved with Veterans' Health Week, I encourage veterans to stay connected and I encourage all of us to keep this issue top of mind.

### Paid Parental Leave

**Ms MACKLIN** (Jagajaga) (15:08): My question is to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister said yesterday:

We encourage employers and employees to negotiate agreements that best fit their particular needs. So why is the Prime Minister punishing employees who have negotiated additional paid parental leave arrangements by cutting paid parental leave? Why does the Prime Minister want these employees to spend less time at home with their newborn babies?

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (15:09): The honourable member for Jagajaga should be very well aware that the government is absolutely committed to ensuring that parents, that mothers and fathers, get all the support they need.

**Ms MACKLIN:** So what are you cutting it for?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Jagajaga has asked her question and will not interject.

**Mr TURNBULL:** Calibrating the right set of measures to achieve the right outcome is absolutely critical. The honourable member should be aware, given her long experience in this field, that you have to look at the totality of the government's programs. Our government is committed to supporting families and we are doing so generously and compassionately and effectively.

### Telecommunications

**Ms MARINO** (Forrest—Chief Government Whip) (15:10): My question is to the Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects representing the Minister for Communications. Will the minister outline how the government is fixing mobile black spots in rural and regional Australia?

**Mr FLETCHER** (Bradfield—Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects) (15:10): I am very pleased to be able to address this important question from the member for Forrest, who has been a very strong advocate for the needs of her community when it comes to improved mobile coverage. I very much enjoyed my visit to the member's electorate last year, where we had some very productive meetings with the community in relation to the need for improved mobile coverage. Of course the Mobile Black Spot Program, under the careful guidance of the then Minister for Communications and his then parliamentary secretary, now in the very capable hands of the Minister for Communications in the other place, has delivered a very substantial outcome for Australians in regional and
remote Australia after six years in which Labor spent not one dollar of public money on improving mobile communications networks in regional and remote Australia.

After six years of inaction by Labor, the coalition came to government with a commitment to spend $100 million improving mobile coverage in regional and remote Australia and by working with the state governments and the mobile network operators—I particularly acknowledge Telstra and Vodafone, who were successful under the program—we succeeded in securing total funding of $385 million and there will be 499 new or upgraded mobile base stations built all around Australia. There will be new and upgraded handheld coverage for 68,000 square kilometres of regional Australia and more than 150,000 square kilometres of regional Australia will receive new external antenna coverage. This is a very significant development in improving mobile coverage in regional and remote Australia—something that the previous Labor government spent six years during absolutely nothing about. In addition, there is a commitment from Telstra that there will be an additional 200 4G mini base stations to be built in towns around Australia offering a coverage radius of 200 to 300 metres from the base station and offering 4G. This is in addition to the main commitment, and there is more because the coalition has committed to a further $60 million of public money being invested in the next phase of the Mobile Black Spot Program. Again, we aim to leverage further spending from state governments and from the private sector. The Turnbull government is delivering improved mobile coverage in regional and remote Australia because we are committed to regional and remote Australia.

Mr Turnbull: Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (15:13): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Does the member claimed to have been misrepresented?

Mr BURKE: I do.

The SPEAKER: He may proceed.

Mr BURKE: In question time today the Prime Minister claimed I was personally associated with Woolworths employees receiving no weekend penalty rates. Woolworths employees receive a Sunday penalty rate.

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (15:13): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Does the Leader of the Opposition claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr SHORTEN: I have been misrepresented.

The SPEAKER: He may proceed.

Mr SHORTEN: I have been misrepresented most grievously and unfairly. During question time the Prime Minister made assertions about negotiations I undertook representing cleaners while I was at the Australian Workers Union. These assertions are entirely incorrect. In my time we lifted the pay rates significantly and improved conditions for people.
DOCS
Presentation

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science) (15:14): Documents are tabled in accordance with the list circulated to honourable members earlier today. Full details of the documents will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Higher Education

The SPEAKER (15:14): I have received a letter from the honourable member for Kingston proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The Government's plan for $100,000 university degrees.

I call upon those members who approve of the proposed discussion to rise in their places.

More than the number of members required by the standing orders having risen in their places—

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (15:14): This is an incredibly important matter for the House to deal with, because the government's plan for $100,000 degrees is still on the table. No amount of sweet talking by the government or the Prime Minister and no amount of reassuring coos by the new Minister for Education and Training can change the fact that this government's disastrous $100,000 degree plan is still on the table. What we have from this minister—instead of a radical change in policy direction—is merely a one-year delay in bringing on those opposite's disastrous policy, which would cut funding to universities and foist $100,000 degrees onto university students. Of course, the question is: why is there a year's delay? Is it because the minister decided that he needed to go back and think about this? No, it is not. The reason the minister had to delay it for one year is that he could not get it through the Senate. The previous minister and this minister both knew that the numbers were against them.

I do hope that the current minister has taken advice from the former minister—that is, do not demon dial the crossbench, do not pay consultants $150,000 to try to get through the door, and do not spend $15 million on an advertising campaign to try and convince the Australian people and the crossbench that they do not have a dud deal in front of them. On our side of parliament, we know that this is a dud deal. The Australian people know that it is a dud deal. Despite the fact that everyone in Australia—apart from the government—knows that this is a dud deal, unfortunately, the government still will not abandon these plans. That is advice that the new minister should take. The new minister should take advice from the Australian people and abandon these plans, but, as of yesterday, he is still backing the plans. Yesterday, Minister Birmingham said on AM Agenda:

So what I've said to date is that we will defer the start date on the currently proposed reforms till 2017 …

That does not sound like a revolutionary change; that sounds like a mere delay. When asked by Kieran Gilbert whether deregulation could possibly make a comeback, the minister gleefully responded:

… that is absolutely what I would hope to do and that is indeed the government's intention …
Despite trying to convince the Australian people otherwise, with a bit of sweet talking and some reassuring comments, the plan for 100,000 degrees is still squarely on the table.

We do know that they have tried to change the salespeople. In the Education and Training portfolio, we have a new, more cuddly minister than the member for Sturt. One would assume that they did not want to change too much, but we do not have the member for Sturt in the House representing the new Minister for Education and Training; we have the member for Cowper. He has made a sterling contribution on the deregulation debate. In fact, he has not actually mentioned higher education in the higher education debate in this House—not once. We searched, and we searched and we searched, and we could not find. I can see why the government are very desperate to change the salesperson. The member the Sturt regularly got up here and professed the importance of these changes, so I know that the government are desperately trying to change the salesperson, but perhaps they might have appointed someone who is actually interested in higher education and has actually mentioned it in the House. Many among those opposite have indeed mentioned it, but they are trying to keep quiet the fact that they have a plan to bring back $100,000 degrees. Even though they are changing the salespeople, they cannot change the product.

In the interim, Labor have announced our plan for higher education. Our plan for higher education is a very important one. It provides a student guarantee for universities so that they have sustainable funding into the future. It boosts quality, investing $31 million for quality teaching and resources, through TEQSA. This is a really important part of ensuring that there is quality in our universities. In addition, we have set an ambitious goal of 20,000 completions by 2020. We have committed to extra completions because it is not good enough just to enrol students into higher education; universities must support them to complete their studies and to get jobs when they graduate. So this has been a very important announcement and piece of work. I must commend the minister for higher education, Senator Kim Carr, for the work that he has done in this area—the shadow minister, sorry. I would like much better for him to be minister than the ministers on the other side.

We have not stopped there. A lot of work has been done by the members for Chifley and Blaxland—indeed, by the whole team behind me—on the policy for start-up years at universities, which will ensure that students can develop their idea, get business know-how and support, and study an extra year at university with that support to innovate and take their start-up ideas to market. These are concrete real ideas. These are concrete policies. These are not just a delay of an unfair and unpopular policy that no-one supported. The minister for Sturt—sorry, the member for Sturt—

A government member interjecting—

Ms RISHWORTH: It is hard to know what his new title is, because he has been moved sideways.

Mr Tudge: You are in opposition; we are in government.

Ms RISHWORTH: I can only hope that we are in government soon—before you can get your disastrous policy through—because, if you continue to pursue this unfair policy, then in Australia we will see many students worse off and many students not pursuing higher education.
The member for Sturt and, indeed, the new minister, continue to profess that they have the support of the universities. The universities do not support their unfair plan. Indeed, Universities Australia have said that it is time to go back to the drawing board to look for a sustainable funding model—and that is exactly what Labor has put up. So I am pleased that the member for Cowper is going to make a contribution, his first contribution, on higher education. I absolutely look forward to that. I hope he will say, ‘I have learnt the lessons of the previous minister, the member for Sturt. Me and my minister in the other place will not demon dial crossbench senators and continue to pursue them, and pursue them ruthlessly, to support our unfair policy. I will not spend $15 million—

Mr Hartsuyker interjecting—

Ms RISHWORTH: You might think it is funny to spend $15 million of taxpayers’ money on a piece of legislation that has not passed the House. We on this side of the House do not think it is funny. We do not think it is funny that you waste taxpayers’ money on a dud piece of legislation—that was never promised before the last election and that was foisted onto the Australian people. No, we do not support that—and we will talk about it. We have a positive plan.

I am very pleased that this next election will be a clear choice between the Labor Party—the party that stands for higher education; the party that stands for accessible higher education and quality higher education that will lead to a job at the end of it—and the other side of the House that does not stand for accessible education, that wants to make a 20 per cent cut to university funding to ensure that universities have no choice but to increase their fees and that does not believe that access and equity should be a core part of their higher education policy. Unfortunately, those on the other side will not heed the concerns of the Australian people; they will not listen to the concerns of the Australian people. Well, it is time they started.

I offer a hand of friendship to the new minister and to the member for Cowper. They may be struggling for a policy, because what they have announced is a delay to their unfair dud of a policy. Perhaps if they are looking for a policy then, as we have a comprehensive policy—one that has been costed, one that delivers quality, accessibility and that supports student completion—I do not mind if they want to take that policy. I am happy for them to take that policy and ditch their old one. We will welcome that.

Mr HARTSUUKER (Cowper—Minister for Vocational Education and Skills and Deputy Leader of the House) (15:25): I welcome the opportunity to speak on this matter of public importance. I found it quite surprising that the member for Kingston would try to lecture us on waste when the Labor Party were delivering us overpriced school halls. That was their contribution to the education system in this country. I must say that when it comes to higher education Labor's legacy is $6½ billion in cuts. They try and claim the high ground on higher education, but in fact their legacy is a legacy of $6½ billion in cuts. From the 2011-12 budget to the 2013-14 budget, Labor hacked $6½ billion from higher education. They made cuts to grants. They increased fees. They cut discounts for paying your HECS debt up-front. Labor cut the Sustainable Research Excellence scheme by some $498 million in the 2012 MYEFO. Labor made no provision for the Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy and the Future Fellowships program for research beyond 2015. Labor were happy to let our research efforts fall off a funding cliff.
Under Labor, international education went backwards. Export income fell by billions of dollars from its 2009-10 peak, because of Labor's neglect, Labor's policy weakness and Labor's bungled handling of what is one of Australia's largest exports and our No. 1 knowledge export. The number of international student enrolments fell by 130,000 between 2009 and 2012. This represents a decline in enrolments of 16 per cent over the 2009-2013 period. It is bad for our economy, it is bad for our education system and it is bad for the industries that depend on the income that education revenue produces.

Who could forget Labor's shameful treatment of country kids when it came to their access to higher education. Who could forget Labor's shame? Labor locked thousands of regional students out of higher education through their shambolic changes to Youth Allowance. This saw some kids miss out on going to university simply because they lived on the wrong side of a line on a map. Labor have no credibility in higher education, and Labor have no credible plan for the future of Australia's higher education system.

Let's get some facts straight. There is no support for Labor's scare campaign. We have weeks and weeks of scare campaign when it comes to the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement. We have months and months of Labor's scare campaign when it comes to their false claim of $100,000 university degrees. Let's look at some of the comments out there. The fees announced by the University of Western Australia and the Queensland University of Technology debunked this scare campaign: it was simply dishonest. I quote the member for Fraser. He is one of the more knowledgeable members of the frontbench—a far cry from the member for Kingston. He said:

There is no reason to think that it—

deregulation—

will adversely affect poorer students.

In a Senate submission, the University of Sydney said:

In our view there has been widely exaggerated claims—

member for Kingston—

by the opponents of deregulation about degrees costing more than $100,000.

... ... ...

In our view the market will not sustain such exaggerated degree prices ... it is vital that we keep tuition rates down ...

That was the University of Sydney. But Open Universities went further. They said:

... we are confident that for numerous courses, deregulation of fees will also lead to a significant decrease in the cost of tuition.

I will repeat that for the benefit of the House. Open Universities said:

... deregulation of fees will also lead to a significant decrease—

not an increase but a decrease—

in the cost of tuition.

We had Labor in government cutting $6½ billion out of higher education, and then persisting, when in opposition, with an endless scare campaign on this issue of the cost of degrees, going forward. I note that my colleague Senator Birmingham announced on 1 October that university funding arrangements for 2016 will be the same as for 2015—
indexed, of course—while he consults on a sustainable funding basis for a world-class higher education system for students. When it comes to their own policies, Labor cannot even get their costings right. In relation to the alleged cancellation, or proposed cancellation, of HECS debts for maths and science students, Labor had three different costings over a period of 24 hours, and all of them were wrong. For all of the three versions of the policy that they created, probably on the back of an envelope, the costings were all wrong.

Having a world-class higher education system is vitally important. We on this side of the House know that if we are going to grow our living standards into the future, if we are going to be a knowledge economy of the future, a high-class, world-class higher education system is a vital part of that. Our universities are the key to developing a smarter, more agile economy. Our higher education sector generates, as I said, substantial export income. And the international education sector is a major employer. Our higher education sector and the international sector support some 130,000 Australian jobs.

The reality is that universities are entering an increasingly competitive global environment where they will be competing not just with Australian universities but with the very best universities around the world. So it is vital that our higher education system will have the resources that it needs and be sufficiently flexible to meet the world competition that it faces now and will face increasingly into the future. We need a funding model that supports a high-class, world-class higher education system.

All the credible experts on higher education agree that reform is needed. We are consulting widely about exactly what the best way is to reform the system. But there seems to be one organisation in this country that denies the need for reform and that wants to be stuck in the past and, in fact, wants to go backwards, and that is the Australian Labor Party. We had Senator Carr—good old ‘Comrade’ Carr—suggesting that he may go back to the future and reintroduce caps on university places. That would lock thousands of students out of university. It is quite surprising that Labor cannot even get the costings right on its own policies.

We on this side of the House understand the importance of higher education. We on this side of the House understand the importance of all facets of education, be it school education, education through the VET system or higher education. We on this side of the House understand the importance of having a high-quality VET sector as well as a high-quality higher education sector. We understand the ability of education to lift the wellbeing of all Australians, to transform the lives of disengaged kids, to allow people to strive to be the best that they can be. We on this side of the House are committed to a quality higher education system into the future that will be world class, that will compete on the world stage and that will generate export dollars for this country in increasing amounts each and every year. We are about supporting higher education. The members opposite are merely stuck in the past.

Ms BURKE (Chisholm) (15:34): I can understand why the member for Cowper has previously never spoken on higher education—because he has absolutely no understanding of it. He actually did not talk about higher education once in that speech over the last 10 minutes. He did not mention a university; he did not mention a program; nor did he outline what the government's policy currently is. All we know is that it has been delayed. He has not told us anything except that it is important. We all agree it is important, but what are you actually going to do about it? On the record at the moment, you have a disastrous policy—a
policy that is terrifying people, a policy that is seeing students who are about to go into their VCE exams at this moment determining that they will not apply for university because they do not know if they will be able to afford it into the future. So frightened are students from all backgrounds that they are saying, 'Well, there's no hope.' There is no hope of their going to university and actually being able to pay their fees.

It is not just because of any old campaign that you may accuse Labor of. The students look at the UK and the US and see the debt that those students are burdened with for the rest of their lives. The greatest debt carried by people in the US is not a Visa card debt, credit debt or mortgage debt; it is university debt, which they live with for the rest of their lives. That is what you want to impose here in Australia—a country in which we need to diversify and find other job opportunities because this government has crucified the manufacturing industry. We now need to look at other sectors, and all of those sectors will need a university degree. It is predicted that, in the future, two out of every three jobs in Australia will require a degree. How are those kids going to get a job if they cannot afford to get a degree?

We used to be the country of equity. This policy that the government has is not a policy of equity and opportunity. It is a policy of the past, where getting to university depends on your parents' salary and your postcode. People like me would never have got there. My parents certainly never got to university. But they sent five of their children to university because of their ability to pay. I am so old that I got my first degree free. My younger brother and sister had to pay HECS, but it was a system that was manageable.

This system that this government wants to introduce will not be manageable and it will be disastrous for my electorate, which is home to two of the largest universities in the country, Monash University and the city campus of Deakin—which the majority of Deakin students attend. There are over 100,000 students who reside in my electorate, and a massive proportion of them are overseas students. They are already paying a huge price for their degrees. We understand how important the higher education sector is to our export market and to the working of our economy.

I have seen in the last 12 months the highest increase in unemployment in my electorate in the 17 years I have been in this parliament. Why? Because of actual job losses in the higher education sector—mainly in TAFE at this point in time. The member for Cowper wants to cry about TAFE, but you have denuded TAFE—$200 million has been taken out of that sector. You have not cared for that sector; it is dying. It is as important in the higher education space as university is. Do not be fooled by this new Prime Minister. Everybody is excited: 'We have a change; it's not Tony Abbott.' Well, so what? It is sound and fury signifying nothing, because the policy has not changed. The policy has not changed; it is just fury. Deregulation and $100,000 degrees will return under Malcolm Turnbull and his new Minister for Education. Do not be fooled. Extreme ideologies are there, and those degrees at $100,000 come from NATSEM modelling. It is a reality that will be forced onto the community. Malcolm Turnbull is on the record as wholeheartedly supporting the changes. He said:

I support unreservedly and wholeheartedly every element in the budget. Every single one. … I support the reforms to higher education.

That was Malcolm Turnbull on 2GB, June 2014. He has not changed; he is only delaying.

Why is he delaying? In the last budget there was still a 20 per cent cut to higher education that has been put on hold. There is still mass uncertainty out there. The Liberal Party still has
a plan for deregulation. There is a mess out there created by the former minister, the member for Sturt, and it will burden Australians for their lifetime—(Time expired)

Mr TUDGE (Aston—Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister) (15:39): The Labor Party are experts at peddling misinformation about coalition policies. We know that they say that we cut things, when we have actually increased the funding. We have heard them peddle misinformation about our industrial relations policies today; we have heard them peddle misinformation about the China Free Trade Agreement in a somewhat disgraceful and I would say almost racist manner; but perhaps the greatest peddling of misinformation that has been going on for 18 months is this scare campaign, which we are hearing again today, that the coalition wants to introduce $100,000 degrees. It is absolute misinformation that they are peddling. Worse than peddling a lie, they are spreading false hope to so many people. They are telling young people that they may no longer be able to afford a higher education degree because of the policies that will be introduced into Australia—that they will have to pay $100,000 up front to get a degree—when we know that is wrong.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta): The members for Lalor and Charlton are out of their seats.

Mr TUDGE: Let me make this very clear to the Labor Party: the first point is that next year the policy which governs the fees that are set by the university will be exactly the same as they are this year. We have made that clear, but, even if full deregulation went ahead next year according to the previous plan that we had on the table, we still would not have $100,000 degrees. How do I know this? Why am I so certain about this fact? The reason I know this is that the universities themselves have said what their fees would be in a deregulated environment. In a deregulated environment, they would set the fees and they have told us what the fees would be. For example, you can ask Vicki Thomson, who is the head of the Australian Technology Network which represents five universities. She said, in this article, 'Don't be fooled by $100,000 degrees': Let me repeat what has been said a million times: the university sector is not looking to introduce standard $100,000 degrees and deregulation won't deliver them. Those who have brainwashed some journalists and independent senators —and the Labor Party— to accept that we plan to do just that deserve to be shot down. It is not only wrong, it is shameful for the fear such myths are creating in the community. That is what Vicki Thomson, the head of the Australian Technology Network, representing five universities, has said.

If you do not listen to her, then perhaps you could listen to what the Group of Eight universities have said. If any university were going to put up their fees by the most, it would be the Group of Eight that would do it. They are sometimes called 'the sandstone universities'—universities like Melbourne, Monash, ANU or Sydney. They put out a statement about fees in a deregulated fee environment. For the benefit of the member for Kingston, who is really not paying attention—and I do not know why, because this is key information for her—the Group of Eight universities in their tabled statement said that their indicative annual fee for a three year undergraduate degree would range from $9993 per annum up to a maximum of $19,849 per annum. At the very most—and this is for a
commerce degree—you would pay $59,548 for that. That would be a degree from one of the Group of Eight universities.

Given what the universities themselves have said would be the fees in a deregulated environment, why do the Labor Party spread such malicious fear throughout the community? Is it because they are a bit slow in listening? Is that what it is? Is it for any other reason? Are they suggesting that universities themselves are lying? No. I think this is deliberate, brazen politics and it is because of the politics of fear that they are doing it. They should be condemned for spreading fear amongst the community and convincing young people that they cannot afford to go to university.

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (15:45): It is astonishing to sit here, on this side of the House, and listen to members opposite—some of whom, like the member for Cowper, represent regional communities like my own, and I see that the member for Braddon in Tasmania is about to jump up—try to defend their track record in higher education: 'Here we are, the masters of announcing same-same-but-different policy in this area.' It is like: 'Well, we've got this dirty little policy that we just want to keep secret for another 12 months now, so let's just let slip it down in the bottom drawer and pretend that we've got nothing to see here.' Labor—you guys—are all out there on a scare campaign. It is just like when you accused us of scaring people on a GP tax that was never going to happen—remember?—but we had to defeat you four times on that one until you learnt your lesson. It is going to be the same again now; Labor will have to stand up here and defend higher education again and again until you guys opposite learn the lesson that you cannot out-price education in Australia.

It is a line in the sand, not only for Labor but also for the Australian people. They understand the need to ensure that our universities are places where people go who have a capacity to learn that is not based in any way, shape or form on their capacity to earn, or that of their parents.

Australians take little comfort from the recent announcement that the Liberals have decided to hit the pause button on their unfair plan for $100,000 university degrees. We did not get to hear the new ministers talking about how the previous minister—ironically named 'the fixer'—could never actually quite get it past anybody in the Senate. He could not actually fix anything up there—he could not even get his foot through the front door. So, now, far from being 'the fixer', he leaves the mess behind for the new minister to clean up. The new minister jumps up and says, 'Oops, we are just going to hit the pause button; this is all a little bit too hot to handle,' rather than fess up to the Australian people: 'You know what? We got it wrong. We got this really, really wrong.'

We know that deregulation is going to hit universities, like mine at Newcastle. I know there are members of the Liberal Party who have got campuses in their seats on the Central Coast and members of the National Party who have got Newcastle campuses sitting in their seats. It is going to absolutely decimate regional universities, like Newcastle, that offer quality education—both quality and excellence—without prejudice. More than one-third of the students in intakes at the University of Newcastle come from low socioeconomic backgrounds. They are the students coming out of the National Party seats—like the students from the member for Cowper's seat who come down to the University of Newcastle to study. I met them there at O-week, Member. They are there because that is the university that has always reached out. Never once has it compromised on quality and excellence, but its door is
open to students who should be there, who have a capacity to learn. It is the university with
the largest number of Indigenous students enrolled in this country: there are 1,000 Aboriginal
students at the University of Newcastle. What a tremendous track record. It has also graduated
more than 33,000 students through alternative pathways to education. These are kids—and,
frequently, mature age students—who were unable to come up to university through the
ordinary channels, through going through high school.

The women, in particular, that I met that are coming through those open foundation courses
now, wanting to take up a university course—and I have been on at least three visits to the
university this year to discuss this issue—have said to me, 'Sharon, I don't know that I can
enrol in university next year. I've already got a mortgage on my house. I cannot take it on,
whether it is $30,000, $50,000 or $100,000; I cannot afford that debt.' Labor wants students to
graduate with a quality higher education degree, not a lifelong sentence to debt. That is what
our policies are focused on, and members opposite could do well to come on board and adopt
Labor's policies. (Time expired)

Mr NIKOLIC (Bass) (15:50): I am not surprised to see the member for Kingston run this
scare campaign, because she has form. She was flown into Launceston last year to debate me
at Launceston College. They bypassed every Labor senator and every Labor member in
Tasmania and brought in the higher education spokesperson to debate me. So she had exactly
the same bag of scary spiders and bag of skeletons to scare the people in my home state. She
failed miserably, because my interest then and my interest now is in actually making higher
education something that more young Tasmanians desire—and we have to do that, because in
my home state, I regret to say, less than seven per cent of young people attend university,
compared to a mainland average of about 40 per cent.

So my interest is to have a lot more young Tasmanians in the future coming to university—
choosing that tertiary pathway—because, even though we need strong vocational pathways,
higher education reform is vital. As we look at the engine room of global prosperity shifting
to the Asia-Pacific region, we need to make sure that we have that engine room of innovation
and research in all of our universities, including in the University of Tasmania.

That is why I am disappointed to say that the long-term future of Tasmanians is being
white-anted by this sort of myopic politicking, and Labor does it in far too many policy areas:
trade, higher education and others. The inevitable offspring of success in both of these policy
areas will be jobs and a more resilient economy, so I know how disappointed people in my
state will be with this sort of scare campaign. What those opposite ignore is the necessity to
fix the government-supported pathways and diploma courses which promise to make higher
education available to thousands more young Tasmanians. Without that higher education
reform, there is little scope to change the way that things are now.

Labor achieves nothing with these scare campaigns apart from attracting comparisons with
the Greens. I heard the member for Chisholm talk about the affordability of higher education.
As we know, the truth of it is that higher education is accessible by people in Australia. There
is a thing called HECS, whereby no Australian student has to pay a dollar up-front to attend
university. They can borrow the full cost through a taxpayer funded scheme and do not need
to repay anything until they earn in excess of $53,345 a year and then at only two per cent of
their income in the initial stages. The member for Chisholm talked about cuts. Let me state for
the record: that is not true either. I refer her to page 6-19 of Budget Paper No. 1, which
confirms that funding for higher education grows every year across the forward estimates, from $8.97 billion to $9.47 billion in 2017-18.

If there is any remorse to be had about higher education, then it is clearly linked to the inaction that we saw under the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments from 2008 to 2013, with billions of dollars cut from higher education. In fact, $6.6 billion was cut from the higher education sector. Even the often-quoted David Gonski has publicly criticised those Labor cuts. Labor continues to fail in this vital policy area through the sorts of false claims it makes about degree costs. In fact, the education minister announced on 1 October that university funding arrangements for 2016 would be the same as for 2015 while he consults on a sustainable funding basis for universities. Even when we were looking at trying to implement the higher education reforms, the highest fees announced by universities were less than half of what Labor is now proposing those fees would rise to. That demonstrates that, if you discount everything Labor says by at least a factor of 50 per cent, you start to get to somewhere close to the truth.

I ask those opposite to put aside their fake skeletons, bag of spiders and scare campaigns and think of the tens of thousands of Australians, and the many thousands of young Tasmanians, who would benefit from higher education reforms. Stop discriminating against those who would benefit most from a revitalised higher education system and join us in evidence based policy making.

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (15:55): I am very pleased to speak on this matter of public importance. Accessing education, particularly higher education, is so vitally important. Those of us on this side of the House in the Labor Party are committed to making sure that our younger Australians can access universities and can access them without having $100,000 degrees. The fact is that, regardless of who leads the Liberal-National government, the savage attacks on our young people just keep coming. They just do not stop. Under Prime Minister Turnbull, we have a Prime Minister who is out of touch. He is particularly out of touch when it comes to regional and rural Australia. This is especially true when it comes to looking at our younger people in regional areas being able to access university education. This government is still committed to $100,000 university degrees. In country areas, in regional and rural Australia, we blame the National Party for this. I see that the member for Cowper is still here and he spoke earlier. We blame people like the member for Cowper for these unfair increases and the fact that there will be $100,000 university degrees.

This MPI goes right to the heart of this cruel government's cuts and how that impacts on training opportunities and subsequent future employment opportunities for our young people. Compounding this situation is the fact that this government has no new ideas at all for education or training for our young people. One of the most ruthless attacks is the deregulation of university fees, the proposed 20 per cent cut in funding, and, of course, we will end up with $100,000 degrees.

At the moment, the government have put their plans aside for 12 months. That is all they have done. They are absolutely committed to deregulation, but the fact is that this plan should be scrapped—not delayed but totally scrapped, totally forgotten, totally dumped. That is exactly what should happen with it. This legislation has been rejected twice by the Senate and the reality is that its implementation in 2016 is virtually impossible. So the government has done no more than admit the obvious, but they have to end all the uncertainty. For once and
for all, drop these unfair plans. The fact is we know how committed those on the other side are to these plans. We have heard speakers today talk about how good it is. They are absolutely committed to pursuing it. We also know that the Prime Minister is committed to it. He is on the record supporting the changes. On 2GB on 5 June 2014, he said:

I support unreservedly and wholeheartedly every element in the Budget. Every single one.

I support every element ...

I support the reforms to higher education.

And he still supports that.

It should be noted that, since they recently announced the one-year delay, we have had a lot of members supporting it. Indeed, today we have heard so much support for it as well. Families from rural and regional areas such as mine, in the electorate of Richmond on the North Coast of New South Wales, know that these really harsh cuts mean that kids from the country will not be able to get to university. It is as simple as that. They will not be able to afford it. It will compound so many costs associated with being able to access university and many families tell me that uni is off the radar for their kids.

I would like to talk about the wonderful university in my electorate, Southern Cross University, which, I might add, has a campus in the member for Cowper's area. He knows how good they are, so why is he supporting cuts to that university? Over the four-year period, until 2019, real cuts in funding for Southern Cross University will be more than $64 million. Southern Cross University services the North Coast of New South Wales and also has a Gold Coast campus on the border. It is outstanding. But the cuts over the four-year period of more than $64 million mean that fees will increase and all the kids who access our great regional universities will not be able to do that. It is a shameful disgrace that the National Party are pursuing this.

Also, they are pursuing it at a time of record youth unemployment. In areas like ours on the North Coast of New South Wales, we have incredibly high youth unemployment and the kids need to be able to access training or educational services such as higher education. We have seen so many cuts in youth training programs and also cuts to TAFE, so, no matter which way young people look, this government is making so many cuts. Labor is absolutely committed to making sure that our young people can access university. We released our plan which will provide security and certainty to students by increasing the number of students completing their study by 20,000 graduates a year from 2020. We know how important it is to do that. We are investing $31 million to boost the quality of teaching and resources in our universities.

But the fact is today that this plan the Liberals and Nationals have for their $100,000 degrees must be dumped. The community wants it. They have spoken loud and clear about it. I condemn this government, and particularly condemn the National Party, for their ongoing cuts to rural and regional Australia. It shows yet again that the Nationals just cannot be trusted. They are so out of touch. In this case they cannot be trusted with our young people's future educational needs.

Mr PASIN (Barker) (16:00): This was meant to be Labor's year of big ideas. Instead, we see instalment after instalment in Labor's concerted campaign to frighten the Australian
people back into poverty. It is not enough that they want to trash the transformative impacts of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement. They also want to put reform of the tertiary education sector into reverse. Unlike those opposite, the coalition government has made a commitment to the Australian people that we will seize the opportunities of the 21st century, including export opportunities in the tertiary education sector.

Reform in this sector is absolutely essential if we are to see the substantial economic and educational opportunities that lie ahead of our nation in the 21st century. Not only do those opposite put at risk the competitiveness of our national universities, but they also put at risk the very viability of our higher education system. Australia's tertiary education sector is a fundamental pillar of Australia's economy and export industries.

Given that we are talking this week about the Trans-Pacific Partnership, I think it is really important that we focus on that export capacity. We have to stop making this argument, centred squarely in the 1970s and 1980s, and bring forward reforms to this sector, in a bipartisan way. Whilst we debate university reform, the tertiary education sector is left, unfortunately, to languish without the tools needed to remain globally competitive.

In terms of the reform that we were prosecuting, the thing that I found particularly important—and this might be relevant to the member for Richmond, given her criticism of country members on this side of the place—is the Commonwealth Scholarships scheme. This was particularly important to me in my electorate, because when I was travelling around my electorate I would hear day to day from parents and students who came from regional areas that the biggest barrier for them in going to university had absolutely nothing to do with fees. After all, we have the Higher Education Loan Program, or HECS as it was called. The biggest barrier, and this might come as a surprise to the member for Richmond, was the cost of picking up, leaving home and getting accommodation in Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne, or Canberra. That is where the real barrier was, and that is where the Commonwealth Scholarships were going to assist rural students. But, unfortunately, we did not see the academic honesty on the other side of the House to be able to acknowledge that significant step forward towards the appropriate reform agenda.

I could also talk about sub-bachelor degrees and how these can be paid for. The James Morrison Academy of Music, in Mount Gambier, is a classic example of opportunities being provided to students in a sub-bachelor framework. Those opposite will not concede this and do not want to concede it, because all they say is their misinformation about $100,000 degrees. The idea that students, who will over the course of their lifetime earn $1 million more than those not undertaking or attaining university or tertiary qualifications, should not pay their fair share is a ludicrous slap in the face for the majority of Australians, who are not receiving and will not receive a university education. I heard that every day in my electorate, and it is a fair submission that has been made to me and others in this campaign.

You can tell that this is a fear campaign, a campaign of misinformation, if you take the opportunity to consider that part of the university that is already deregulated. Let us look at postgraduate degrees and at international students. Those opposite, who want to talk about $100,000 degrees and want to live in that globe of fear will not say to you, 'Look, postgraduate degrees are between $10,000 and $30,000 in this country.' International qualifications are similar. They will not speak about that. Instead, it is disappointing that what they want to do is frighten the Australian people all the way back to poverty. It is a campaign...
we have heard a lot about and I think we will hear more about it in the lead-up to the next election. Shame on them.

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (16:05): Well, hasn't this MPI set the cat amongst the pigeons. Here I was preparing this afternoon and thinking: we might get there and someone on the other side might get up and announce a new policy. I was quite hopeful that perhaps we would come in here this afternoon, all prepared to talk about $100,000 degrees, to find that they had been dustbinned. But, no, what we have learnt this afternoon is what we knew before we got here. What we have learnt is that while the member for Sturt is busy 'unleashing his revolutionary', the new minister is hiding the mess left by the member for Sturt, the self-proclaimed fixer, who has gone off to fix something else.

What we have learnt is that they are not throwing out this terrible policy. They are not going to stop the cuts to universities. They are not going to stop the $100,000 degrees that they want to foist on the young people in my electorate of Lalor. No, what we have learnt today is that they are trudging on with this great policy of theirs. They are trudging on with their unfairness. They are trudging on with that 2014 budget. They are trudging on with the cruel, unfair measures from the 2014 budget. New minister? There is nothing new to see here, though—$100,000 degrees are alive and well, just as we thought. All we have heard from the new minister is a concession that he could not possibly bring in the price rises in 2016 because it had been beaten in the Senate twice and he could not put the legislation through a third time. The fixer has been foiled, one might say, and left this mess for the new minister to try to clean up. Rather than come in here today and make an announcement of a new policy—rather than follow Labor, lockstep, down the road in the year of ideas and give us an idea—they are staying with this policy, which has been rejected soundly by the Australian public. I am trying to remember what month it was last year when the petition ticked over to 100,000 signatures against the $100,000 degrees. I am trying to remember when we ticked over that milestone.

Mr Pasin: You're addicted to this number. There are other numbers!

Ms RYAN: These are real numbers—$100,000 is a real number for a degree. Those opposite can persist in not believing what has been put in front of them, but, unfortunately, they have a trust problem when it comes to education—strangely enough, they have a trust problem in this area. The deregulation, the cuts to universities, the $100,000 degrees and the Americanisation of our tertiary education system that they tried to sell to the Australian public and tried to push past the Senate twice are still alive for the government.

I implore this government: see sense now, before it is too late. Really, what you could do is read our policy. In this era, when we need innovation, you can take it from the party that understands education, the party that cares about education and the party that will go to the ramparts, fighting for fair education for the young people of this country. You could pull out our policy documents. Look at our announcements, which will tell you how to support students in getting a tertiary qualification. They will explain to you that, rather than create $100,000 degrees, you should actually be reimbursing the HECS of those students who are prepared to study the subjects we need them to study, who are going to drive the new economy. In question time today, I heard the Prime Minister say, 'We can't rely on iron ore anymore.' I heard him say it. It is something new that he has said.

Ms Claydon: Well, invest in higher education.
Ms RYAN: Invest in higher education—there is a thought. Come up with a new policy. But, right now, the public knows, and today's MPI has proved it: you have no new ideas. You are going to stay with the cruel, unfair measures of the 2014 budget and you are going to persist with the Americanisation of Australia's universities. That is the plan to date.

Ms Claydon: Let the market rip!

Ms RYAN: And they say they understand markets. If they understood markets, they would know that, if you put a 20 per cent cut in place, deregulate and offer a business the opportunity to make that up, gee, they will charge higher fees.

(Time expired)

Mrs McNAMARA (Dobell) (16:10): Here we are again, and welcome to another round of 'Let's debate Labor's lies', probably the worst game show in town, but at least we have front-row seats. The word for the week is 'duplicitous'—the same lies, the same rhetoric, the same mistruths and the same scaremongering, over and over again, just on different topics. I am sure that they decide their topics over a cup of coffee at morning tea or around the water cooler—'What are we going to lie about today?' The topic for today's lies is the $100,000 university degrees. Last time, the poison being spread was about the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement. Next week, who knows what it will be?

Let's talk about today's issue and the scaremongering campaign designed to shock every Australian into thinking the government is going to raise the cost of university degrees to some ridiculous amount. As an astute member of parliament, I thought I would do a bit of research and see the background behind these claims and assertions. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that it was actually a former member for Dobell who started the lies and scaremongering about the $100,000 degrees.

Mr Pasin: That guy?

Mrs McNAMARA: No! It was when he was opposition education spokesperson. Who might I be referring to? Before everyone gets too excited, I am not talking about the infamous Craig Thomson. I will mention him later, but I am talking about Michael Lee. Famously, during an interview back in 1999, when he was opposition education spokesman, Mr Lee spoke about a topic that, unfortunately, at the time he did not quite understand. It appears that his modelling was slightly flawed. Then, in 2003, the then shadow education minister, Jenny Macklin, jumped on the untruth bandwagon and also began spouting about issues that she had little knowledge of—and guess what? It was $100,000 university degrees. Are we really surprised?

Let's get some facts straight. This government is not—I repeat: not—planning to raise the cost of university degrees. In fact, it is not the government that is responsible for even setting the cost of university degrees. This is the responsibility of the institutions themselves. So I am unsure why there is an assumption that the government is raising fees; unfortunately, the opposition is helping to spread this innuendo. However, as we know, this is a familiar tactic—it is the same game as is being played now with the issue of penalty rates. It is common knowledge that the Fair Work Commission are the ones who make any changes to penalty rates, not the government of the day.

The member for Kingston earlier mentioned a waste of government money on advertising campaigns. I need to remind her of the unions' $30 million advertising campaign and other things that they are up to to spread lies about penalty rates and ChAFTA. This is $30 million
of union membership fees. Perhaps they should have got advice from the Health Services Union on using members' money before they embarked on that campaign. Why should this debate be any different at all to all the other lies? I guess at least this is a debate we have been given prior notice of, not like some other invitations we have received lately.

Let's remind the opposition of the $6.6 billion worth of cuts to higher education and research which Labor announced from 2011 to 2013. How convenient that they forgot to mention that. Weren't we lucky that not all were legislated? Some of Labor's own cuts have themselves been blocked in the Senate, which is a perfect example of the dog chasing its own tail. These proposed cuts included the removal of the 10 per cent HECS-HELP discount and the five per cent HELP repayments bonus and a cap on tax deductibility on self-education expenses. What a great example of showing the Australian community how much you care about higher education! This is in contrast to the coalition government, who have increased higher education spending since being in government—I repeat: increased.

Five minutes is not enough time, really, to adequately talk about the ridiculous lie campaign regarding higher education that the opposition, in conjunction with their union masters, is working to maliciously spread within Australian communities—scaring students away from tertiary education. What a shame. This is an opposition that cannot even get the costings on their own education policies right, sprouting three different figures in 24 hours, which is hardly surprising when you think of my predecessor—I did say I would mention him—whose credit cards probably paid for three different figures in 24 hours as well! (Time expired)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta): Order! The discussion has now concluded.

COMMITTEES
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights
Report

Mr RUDDOCK (Berowra) (16:15): On behalf of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, I present the committee's report entitled Human rights scrutiny report: Twenty-ninth report of the 44th Parliament.

Report made a parliamentary paper in accordance with standing order 39(e).

Mr RUDDOCK: by leave—I rise to speak to the tabling of this report, the 29th report of the 44th Parliament. The committee's report examines the compatibility of bills and legislative instruments with Australia's human rights obligations. This report considers bills introduced into the parliament from 14 to 17 September 2015 and legislative instruments received from 28 August to 17 September 2015 and includes the committee's consideration of three responses to matters raised in previous reports.

Of the 26 bills examined in this report, 20 are assessed as not raising human rights concerns, five raise matters requiring further correspondence and one has been concluded on an advice-only basis. The committee has also concluded its examination of four instruments and deferred its consideration of one bill and three instruments.

One of the bills considered in this report is the Health Legislation Amendment (e-Health) Bill 2015. This bill seeks to amend the law relating to personally controlled electronic health records, which provides an electronic summary of an individual's health records. Currently, a
person's health records can only be included on a register if they choose to opt in to the system. This bill would enable trials to take place, which could then be applied Australia-wide, to enable the health records of all Australians to be automatically uploaded onto the electronic database unless the person actively opts out of the process.

The committee considers that this raises significant privacy concerns which require further justification. In particular, the committee questions whether the objective of the bill, in automatically uploading personal sensitive health information onto the database in an attempt to drive increased use of the database by healthcare professionals, is a legitimate objective for the purposes of international human rights law. To be capable of justifying a proposed limitation of human rights, a legitimate objective must address a pressing or substantial concern and not simply seek an outcome regarded as desirable or convenient.

Thus the committee is concerned to know whether the limitation on the right to privacy is proportionate; in particular, whether there are adequate safeguards in place to protect an individual's privacy and whether the opt-out model is the least rights-restrictive way to achieve the objective the government seeks. As usual, I will write to the relevant minister to seek her advice on these important questions.

The report also considers the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Further Strengthening Job Seeker Compliance) Bill 2015. This bill seeks to impose additional requirements on job seekers, such as the precondition to receiving social security benefits. Under international treaties which we are a party to, Australia is obliged to provide social security for people who lack access to other income and have insufficient means to access health care and support themselves or their dependants. However, under international law it is legitimate for a state to impose reasonable qualifying conditions to access that social security benefit. Many qualification conditions are considered to be reasonable under international law, such as waiting periods for benefits and requirements for welfare recipients to meet certain obligations, such as a minimum number of jobs applied for or a minimum number of hours of community service. Mutual obligation or mutual responsibility is thus an accepted feature of the right to social security and, on this basis, the committee has assessed that three out of the five conditions imposed by this bill do not raise human rights concerns.

However, we have concerns as to whether the bill's limitation on the right to social security and an adequate standard of living in relation to two other measures is justifiable. The committee has therefore decided to write to the Minister for Employment seeking further information around these issues.

As always, I encourage members and others to follow the committee's report to better inform their understanding of our deliberations.

With these observations, I commend the report to the House.

BILLS

Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

to which the following amendment was moved:
That all words after "That" be omitted with a view to substituting the following words:

"the House:

(1) notes the evidence given before the Senate inquiry into this bill to the effect that senior officials from the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development advised Mr Bill Milby of North Star Cruises that for his company to compete in Australia under this proposed legislation, he should reflag to a foreign State, sack his Australian crew and hire a crew on cheap foreign wages;

(2) accordingly declines to give the bill a second reading; and

(3) expresses its support for regulation aimed at revitalising the Australian shipping industry by ensuring that:

(a) the Australian shipping industry operates on a level playing field with foreign ships, based on Australian standards, when working in Australia; and

(b) Australia's vital economic, environmental and national security interests in fostering a local shipping industry are safeguarded".

Ms PERRETT (Moreton) (16:20): Thank you, Deputy Speaker Vasta—my electorate neighbour—for letting me continue my response to the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, which was rudely interrupted by question time and matters of public importance! This bill, more readily known as Work Choices on water, has some dubious claims. Eighty-eight per cent of the savings the government estimates will flow from this bill will be due to Australian workers being replaced by foreign crews. That is a disgrace. There is a real question about how many of those foreign crews will be working for Third World wage rates. If I could flag the racism of the free market, where people seem to be more relaxed when foreign workers from poorer countries are being exploited here in Australia. We have seen it in the Four Corners expose of the workers in 7-Eleven; I have seen it in Queensland with some Taiwanese backpackers being exploited around Bundaberg, in some of the agricultural areas, where they were not being paid award wages. It does happen. Maybe it also happens to the Irish and the Americans and the Kiwis and perhaps people from other countries, but I think sometimes in Australia we can be more relaxed when it is a foreign worker from a poorer country, with the suggestion that because they would not have received such compensation in their own country it is somehow acceptable. That is not the Australian way.

This is an extremely short-sighted cost saving measure with no consideration for either the Australian workers who will be replaced on these ships or the foreign workers who will be working under conditions that we would not find acceptable. As we know, when people are at sea, literally a different set of rules applies and it can be hard to catch up and find and interview people and find out what went on. I have seen that, and the member for Isaacs would have seen that when he received the report on crimes at sea when he was the Attorney-General—the problems with finding reliable witnesses to what goes on beyond our coastline.

Under this bill only a very small number of senior positions will be required to be filled by an Australian citizen or resident or a person with a valid visa. How will Australian seafarers gain the necessary experience to move through the junior positions and eventually fill the senior positions if there will be no jobs available for them? It is like a lemmings policy, whereby the maritime industry will eventually go over the career cliff. It will start with a couple of senior positions but eventually the opportunities will ossify. It is not only the value of experienced Australian seafarers being in senior positions on ships in our waters but also the value of those experienced seafarers later taking onshore jobs that ensure the safety of our
coastline as they do now. We will not have enough experienced Australian seafarers to take up these positions.

The National Maritime Training Partnership, which includes the Australian Maritime College at the University of Tasmania, in its submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport urged that the committee consider the effect that this bill would have on the next generation of seafarers in Australia, particularly Tasmanians, whose state has particular unemployment challenges. The National Maritime Training Partnership sought inclusions in the bill that would:

… help provide a pathway for the next generation of seafarers into meaningful positions of responsibility on board ships trading around the coast of Australia. Importantly this pool of qualified mariners will help provide for the next generation of mariners to fill positions ashore in education, regulation, marine pilotage and port management.

I particularly highlight marine pilotage, which I will return to in a minute. Having crews with local knowledge of shipping channels also aids in the environmental protection of Australian waters.

There have been a number of serious incidents in recent years that have put at risk our valuable environmental assets, such as the Great Barrier Reef—I say to a fellow Queenslander. In 2009, 230 tonnes of fuel oil, 30 tonnes of other fuel and 31 shipping containers containing 620 tonnes of ammonium nitrate spilled into the Coral Sea north of Moreton Bay. The then Premier of Queensland, Anna Bligh, declared at the time that it was the worst environmental disaster Queensland had ever seen. The disaster was caused by unsecured cargo on the Hong Kong registered MV Pacific Adventurer. The spill washed ashore along the 60 kilometres of Queensland coastline, which included the Sunshine Coast—a great tourist spot—Moreton Bay, Bribie Island and Moreton Island, named after the same Lord Morton as my electorate is named after, with a different spelling.

In 2010 a 750-foot Chinese bulk coal carrier, MV Shen Neng 1, ran aground east of Rockhampton. This vessel struck the Great Barrier Reef, scraping along the reef for a considerable distance and causing a very large grounding scar. The ship was 10 kilometres outside of the shipping lane. The vessel's fuel tank was damaged and an oil slick of heavy fuel oil ran for two nautical miles. Chemical dispersants were used to break up the oil slick. This incident alone posed a serious risk to our Great Barrier Reef.

As recently as this year, the ship's master of the China Steel Developer, a Taiwan flagged bulk carrier, was charged with failing to take on a pilot prior to navigating the Great Barrier Reef. The general manager of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, Andrew Skeat, said about the incident:

For certain sections of the Great Barrier Reef and for particular types of vessels, the use of pilots is mandatory because they greatly enhance protection of animals, habitats and sensitive areas of the Marine Park, including coral reefs.

… … …

The potential environmental, economic and social consequences could have been severe if an unescorted voyage had gone wrong.

All three of these incidents occurred off the Queensland coastline, and we all know how important tourism is to the Queensland economy. As a Queenslander I am particularly concerned about damage to our local natural assets. These are very large vessels using the
shipping lanes that surround our coastal waters and in some cases navigate through the Great Barrier Reef itself. Local knowledge of our waters and our environmental assets is vital. It is also vital that crews on board ships in our waters are not compromised by poorer working conditions which could lead to fatigue and bad decisions being made by those in charge of these very large vessels operating near important and valuable natural assets.

Another important consideration in terms of what this bill will impact on is the screening of shipping crews using our waters. It is a much more difficult task to screen foreign crews. The impact of this bill is that the majority of the mariner crews using our waters will be foreign. The cost of the extra screening that will be required has not been factored into the costs of this package, and neither can we effectively assess the efficacy of such background screens. This bill, far from fostering our Australian shipping industry, will give foreign flagged shipping an advantage over Australian flagged vessels. We heard this played out in the Senate a few weeks ago. Australian companies would be at a disadvantage in their own territory. In fact, there was the suggestion that Australian public servants were informing Australian shipping agencies that it would be to their advantage to get rid of their Australian crews and bring on foreign sailors. Australia does not allow other forms of domestic transportation methods, such as planes, trains, freight trucks and buses, to operate by using overseas registration or overseas pay conditions. Australia's shipping industry is important. And as I have seen from my background in looking at the cruise industry, if you do not have standards that are going to be enforced by regular audits and checks, then anything can happen when the ships slip beyond Sydney Harbour.

Workers in Australia's shipping industry are important and should be working for Australian pay and under Australian conditions. Our future generation of seafarers should be allowed to continue the rich history of Australian seafarers who have gone before them. Their skills should be honed through working on Australian flagged ships in local waters so that they can become the senior experienced seafarers who will protect our coastline into the future. It is better to have Australians working on our docks looking after decisions that are made about our cargo, because the reality is there will always be people who will try to smuggle things into Australia. It is better to have Australian seafarers making decisions about what goes on in the ships and on the docks rather than people with loyalty to foreign nations.

Our environmental assets, such as the Great Barrier Reef, are too important to risk. These should be protected to every extent that they can be via these laws. A little bit of economic nationalism goes a long way in this area. Our shipping regulations play a very important role in these protections. We do not want to have an escalation of the incidents I have detailed already. Work Choices on water should not go ahead, and that is why I will not be supporting this bill.

Ms HALL (Shortland—Opposition Whip) (16:30): Australia is an island nation, and the waters that surround our island are the highway that ships travel to deliver goods to Australians and to take goods from Australia overseas. In actual fact, 99 per cent of shipping is based on trade. We have the longest coastline in the world and the fifth largest shipping task of any nation. Ten per cent of the world's trade by weight is carried by ships either to or from Australia, and what does this government want to do? It wants to destroy the Australian shipping industry. This government, or should I even say those on the other side of this House, have always had an ideological hatred of the Australian shipping industry. They have
never appreciated its value to our nation. They do not get it. They do not understand how vitally important it is for Australia to have a strong shipping industry that has ships crewed by Australians.

I believe this legislation is driven by the Abbott-Turnbull government's ideological hatred of maritime workers and the Maritime Union of Australia. This government does not like the MUA, and it will go to any extent to destroy that union, even if it means destroying our shipping industry along the way, even if it means making sure that 1,000 Australian mariners are left without jobs. That is not a concern to this government. Unfortunately, this government is committed to introducing Work Choices on the water, as many of my colleagues have said before me. It is driven by the wishes and desires of the Business Council of Australia. Not only is this legislation not supported by the MUA and maritime workers and many of the industries associated with shipping, it is also not supported by the ship owners. So here we have a government pushing legislation through this House that will lead to job losses, and it will lead to a situation that is not supported by anyone in the industry. It will lead to a situation where we do not have an Australian shipping industry.

When I first saw this legislation I asked: 'What does it deliver to Australia? Will it make our shipping industry stronger?' I have already answered that—no. Will it lead to the development of some other industry? No, there is absolutely no evidence of that. Will it help Australian workers? This legislation condemns Australian mariners to unemployment, and I will touch a little bit more on that in a moment. Will it be of economic benefit for the country? Once again no. We are losing an industry and we are actually allowing Australian jobs to be replaced by mariners from overseas who receive very low wages and work in appalling conditions. There are many practices that take place on these ships of convenience that this government is so keen to see replace the shipping industry and the mariners that we have today.

What will it mean for the security of our nation? Australian mariners currently have to get a maritime security identity card, and every time they arrive at a port they have to present their cards. But foreign workers do not have the same requirement, so when it comes to security and monitoring those workers on ships, that does not even measure up.

I have to ask, 'What is the motivation?' I can only see that this motivation is driven by an ideological hatred of Australian mariners and of the union that supports those workers and by a total lack of commitment to an Australian shipping industry. I might add that this is very different to what is happening in other countries. For instance, in the United States they have the Jones Act, which bans foreign ships' crews from its coastal trade. Canada, Japan and nations of the European Union have similar practices in place. So here we are in Australia, with the largest coastline of any country in the world, deciding that we want to get rid of our shipping industry. It is absolutely ridiculous. It is a bad decision.

I do not know if any members on the other side of this House have ever been on a flag-of-convenience ship. Currently, there is the single-voyage permit and the continuing voyage permit, and then you have your Australian ships. I have been on one of these foreign flagged ships, and when you go onto these ships the conditions are nothing like the conditions on the Australian flagged ships. They are often just rust buckets, and the conditions that those workers live and work under are absolutely appalling.
When the former member for Shortland, my good friend the Hon. Peter Morris, was in this parliament he was chair of the then Transport, Communications and Infrastructure Committee. The deputy chair was Paul Neville, who was then the member for Hinkler. They did an inquiry into these flag-of-convenience ships, and the report that was brought down was the Ships of shame report. There are a lot of new members on the other side of this parliament, and I suggest that they pick up that report and have a look at it because there is a lot of information in there that shows exactly the conditions that mariners on those ships live and work under.

This government just do not care. All they are doing is answering to their masters on the Business Council of Australia. They are not concerned about the shipping industry and not concerned about the workers. They certainly are not looking towards the economic stability of our country, looking towards the types of industries that we wish to have, looking towards the security of our nation or looking towards the fact that we need to have a vibrant maritime industry. We are an island nation, and this has implications when it comes to the security of Australia not only with allowing workers into the country and with the level of security checks on those mariners but also because we need to have a vibrant merchant navy in times of conflict or such.

I am yet to find one reason why this legislation should be supported. It is really evil legislation. It is ideological driven. It is extreme. It is pushing an extreme right-wing agenda. It removes reference to reviving the Australian shipping industry, which Labor put in place when they were in government because they could see the benefits of having a vibrant shipping industry in an island nation like Australia with ocean borders and with the coastline that we have here in this country.

This government's new law really extends the non-application of the Fair Work Act's standards to foreign workers on foreign ships in Australian waters and it significantly extends the application of Third World wages to coastal trade. This is about forcing shipowners to employ overseas workers and then pay them Third World wages. Those wages are, I think, about a third of the wages that are paid to Australian mariners. If members on the other side were to take the time to read the Ships of shame report which Peter Morris brought down, in some cases they would find that invariably the workers do not even receive those wages. There have been numerous documentaries done on this particular issue, and to see Australia going down this track of being prepared to forsake our shipping industry is an absolute crime.

This bill deregulates the Australian domestic shipping industry by removing preference for Australian flagged and crewed ships operating in and around Australia. It really does symbolise the attitude of this government to Australian workers and jobs. Instead of the three-tiered system that there is at the moment, there is a single-tiered system for granting access to coastal shipping. This is to be able to work the Australian coastline for a 12-month period. It extends the period of exemption for non-domestic standards, and these ships will not even be required to have one Australian worker on them unless they are in Australian waters for more than 183 days.

When members on the other side of this House have time to think about this legislation and before they vote for it, they should think about Australian workers, like the man I was talking to last week who said, 'I get a decent wage, but I'm away from home for six weeks. Whilst I'm away, my wife has to look after the children. She does everything.' They actually have a
disabled child, and there is enormous pressure on the family. He said, 'But I'm prepared to do
that because I get the compensation that I get. If I lose my job, I don't know what I'll do.' It is
similar to the situation of those mariners on the Alexander Spirit, who were told that they
would be redundant when they got to Singapore, or like the department advising Bill Milby
that he should sack his Australian crew and employ foreign workers.

This demonstrates this government's commitment to Australian workers and that is why the
legislation that is before the House is Work Choices on the water, legislation that is going to
undermine our shipping industry, legislation that is going to undermine Australian workers. It
is bad legislation and no member of this parliament should support it. (Time expired)

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (16:45): In a most famous letter by Edward Granville Theodore,
whom Malcolm Fraser and Paul Keating and a humble person such as myself consider to be
the most important person in Australian history, written to Ben Chifley, he said: 'The most
important job of government—in fact, the job of government, and I don't just mean the
politicians; I include in that the captains of industry and the media—is to provide jobs for its
people.'

Here we have a government initiative to take jobs away from its people. It is a fairly simply
formula and it is from the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia—to the shame of the people in
his electorate who voted for him. They really should feel ashamed of themselves if they do
not know that their member of parliament is out there saying that Americans work for $8 an
hour, exactly the same figure that the lady mining magnate from Western Australia uses—
$320 a week. We know that she is a very strong supporter of the National Party and their
viewpoint. Clearly, they are a very strong supporter of her viewpoint, that we should work for
$320 a week in Australia. That is $15,000 a year. In this country, the average price of
accommodation is $20,000 a year. Clearly, for starters you would have them living under
trees. If you think that that is an exaggeration then you ought to go and look at some of the
poor people in your electorates, and it does not matter what electorate you are in. Conditions
are rapidly deteriorating for the poor people in Australia. The number of poor people is
increasing dramatically.

What is the purpose of government if it is not to create jobs and prosperity for the people?
It says: 'Services are up to the private sector now. They will provide your water, your
electricity. That will all be privatised.' What do we have government for? Is it there to protect
us against the excesses of the corporation? That would be a funny joke! You have to look no
further than the infamous Hardie case, where ALP government after ALP government ignored
them and then Liberal government after Liberal government ignored them, and people were
dying of cancer. That is not new in Australia.

A hundred years ago, one in 30 went down the mines and never came back up again. They
died the terrible death of miner's phthisis. The first member for Kennedy was one of those
people who left politics dying of miner's phthisis. The second Prime Minister of Australia,
Andrew Fisher, saw his father die of miner's phthisis. He left politics dying of miner's
phthisis. The first Labor Premier and a world leader in world history came from one of my
hometowns, Charters Towers, also left politics dying of miner's phthisis. So do not for the
government to protect us from the excesses of the corporation. What the hell is government
there for if it is not there to provide jobs and prosperity for its people?
The government think it is its job to take jobs and prosperity away and hand it over to the giant corporations that own the shipping—which is not owned by Australians. They might say, 'We're free marketeers; we're with America. They're free marketeers.' They are on shaky ground there because the Jones Act says of intercoastal shipping—which is what we are talking about here; port to port within Australia, port to port within America—that the ship must be totally American owned, totally American crewed and totally built in America. We are saying the exact opposite of the Jones Act. Either the Americans are correct and the rest of the world are correct or, once again, the government of Australia is Mr Cleverness—the only Mr Cleverness on the planet. I know which way I am going to be betting.

The Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 says that so long as you keep a ship out of Australia for one day more than six months, you do not have to have any pay and conditions; you can employ people on an average Asian wage level of around $5 a day—that is what you can do and that is all right. Only 2,000 Australians will lose their jobs. We ordinary Australians are a bit sick of hearing this. Up in North Queensland, Mr Keating said, 'It's only 900 jobs you're going to lose.' It was 2,000 and they closed the timber industry. 'It is only going to be 4,000 over here and only 6,000 over there. It's only going to be 55,000 in the car industry. It's only been nearly 100,000 in the whitegoods industry. It doesn't matter, there will be something to take its place.'

Have a look at the dollar. Even though you have interest rates a thousand per cent higher than the rest of the world—you are on two per cent, the rest of the world is on 0.2 per cent—you still cannot hold the dollar up. People are saying: 'Hold on, what's this country about?' 'They are about iron ore and coal.' 'Iron ore and coal? We're getting off here real quick.' That is what is happening. To the people who sit in this place—and I wrote a successful history book and I can clearly see the judgement of history and the judgement that it passes upon people—if you think that the judgement of history is not going to catch up to you, you believe in the tooth fairy.

There was a wonderful exchange between Mr Keating—the architect of the modern age; Mr Free Market himself—and George Bush Senior. Mr Keating said, 'President, we would like you to give our Australian farmers a fair go.' George Bush said, 'I'm in the business of looking after American farmers,' and walked off. There is a message there. Would to heaven that we had a leader in Australia who said, 'I'm here to look after Australian farmers not to create free markets.'

The imbecility, which has been one of the contributing factors to him losing his prime ministership, was for the Prime Minister to stand here and clap the minister for trade after the free trade deal with China. They thought it was a good thing. If anyone in Australia thought it was a good thing, I have not run across them. They said it was a good thing for the beef industry. The benefit for the beef industry is 2c on a plate of beef in China. Before the free trade deal it cost you 30 bucks to buy a stake in Beijing. After the free trade deal it was 30 bucks less 2c. That will make a difference to trade with Australia!

People on the government side of this parliament are locked into a belief system that says the problem is wages and that if we cut the wages—to quote the Deputy Prime Minister—to American levels of $8 an hour all will be well in this country. It is rather interesting for me, who comes from a state where, in 1990, we were forging ahead on all fronts. We were pro-immigration because we desperately needed workers for our exploding economy in
Queensland. We had the exact opposite attitude of the Labor Party, which is a rabid free-marketeering party, and the Liberal Party, which wants to outcompete them to be the most rabid free-marketeering party on earth. If there is some other country on earth participating in a free-market economy could you point it out to me? It most certainly is not Brazil. It most certainly is not China. It most certainly is not Russia. It most certainly is not America. Where is this free-market economy? Maybe it exists, somewhere, but I have not been told about it.

There is not a single person in this House who would not know that there are no free markets in these countries. They are out there to win. They see it as their duty and responsibility to create jobs and prosperity for their people. They are not sitting back, saying 'It's got nothing to do with me. It's the Liberals' fault that we're closing down the car industry,' or 'It's the Labor Party. It's their fault that the car industry is closing down.' No, they are out there ensuring that their car industries stay open, that their shipping industries—like we are talking about here today—stay open and provide jobs for their people. You come into this place and call yourself an Australian. It is like that sign we see everywhere: 'If you are a Christian, what did you do today to prove it?' If you are an Australian, what did you do today to prove it? Every single day that I have sat in this parliament it has seemed to me that we are doing everything humanly possible to prove that we are not Australians. Future generations will pass an extremely harsh judgement upon these people.

As for America with this $8 an hour, I know a lot of Americans and they do not know anyone who works for $8 an hour. There is no doubt that California is the biggest agricultural juggernaut on earth, with their great irrigation developments, moving water great distances. You must admire them as a race of people for what they have done in irrigating Southern California, which is one of the driest and hottest places on earth, and turning it into a food bowl for the planet. But there is no doubt that they have low wage levels for a lot of their workers. They have the highest number of beggars in the world—more than India, would you believe? America has more beggars on its streets than India has. At one stage, California had more people in jail than in primary school. That is a pretty healthy sort of society, isn't it?

People won't starve. They will find a way to get money. They will thieve, they will sell drugs, they will do whatever they have to do. If you think people are going to live on $15,000 a year, for a wife and three kids, they are not. They will find some way around it, and they will find the way around it in the way people have in places like California.

The government said we will get cheaper shipping costs. They said we would get cheaper milk when we deregulated the milk industry. The price to the farmer would go down through the floor; therefore, the price to the consumer would go down. I recommend people read my book because it has all the statistics in there. It is only $39. Actually, you cannot get it now because we have sold out, I am proud to say. It is pretty simple. When they deregulated the dairy industry they thought: deregulate the labour market and deregulate the farming market.

When they deregulated the farming market, and dairying, they were on 59c the day before deregulation and 42c the day after. There was a 30 per cent cut in their income. So 7,000 or 8,000 dairy farmers exited the industry, taking about 20,000 workers' jobs and contractors with them. A lot of them exited in the most tragic manner possible. Sadly, I speak with authority on the subject. Did it benefit the consumer? No. Within 18 months the price had gone up not down. Yes, it went down by 3c for two days. The farmer went down 12c but the price went down 3c. It was not three days, it was about six months. Just to make it look good,
they pulled it down by 3c for about six months. Then it went up very significantly. Over the next few years it went up over 20 per cent. Was it in the consumer's benefit? No, it was not.

What a concept—that if you pay slave labour wage levels that somehow we will benefit in our international competitiveness. Les Thiess, the great man, was going around saying, 'I pay the highest wages in the world', and taking great pride in saying that. The much maligned Bjelke-Petersen was able to say, 'We have the highest wage structures in the world'. It was what they skited about, not what they explained was the problem. It was our aspiration as a state—for Queensland. It was the aspiration of our great captains of industry, and a person like Andrew Forrest would fall into that category now. But we now define it as the problem, and people in this place define it as the problem. If they can show me an example where lowering wages has benefited us in international trade, I would like to see it. (Time expired)

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (17:00): The Liberal-National government has a new leader. Today, we are in day 2 of the parliament where the new leader and his new cabinet are in place. But the bill we are debating today absolutely shells the cat. The government might have a new head, but that head sits on the same rotting carcass as the last one. And it is rotten. Just look at what this bill does. What kind of government actively destroys the jobs of its citizens—and I mean actively destroys them—through a bill or a piece of legislation? They are not being destroyed inadvertently, not by unintended consequences, not by mistake or accidentally lost. What kind of government purposely sits down, develops a policy, drafts a bill, brings it to the House of Representatives and later to the Senate which actively and intentionally destroys the jobs of thousands of Australians? That is what we are debating today. This government has a new head but the same rotting corpse of a body.

This is an extraordinary bill that we debate today. What kind of government actively destroys the jobs of its citizens? The answer is really clear today: it is a Liberal government. We saw it under and Abbott and Hockey with the car industry. We saw them dare the industry to leave our shores. We saw it under Abbott and Hockey, and now in the new leadership team of Turnbull and Morrison, we see the active, intentional destruction of the Australian shipping industry. It has a new head, but it is the same rotten government—a job-destroying government with no regard for Australian workers. In fact, as demonstrated by this bill, it has active contempt for Australian workers and their jobs.

You could be forgiven, if you listened to the rhetoric over the last two days, for thinking that this government actually cares about opportunities and jobs. There has been nice rhetoric about innovation and start-ups, and that is a very important area. If Australia wants to prosper in the future, we need to build new industries. You will see that the opposition, dating back even further than the budget reply speech, have put out a number of polices involving start-ups and innovation, and we have been doing that for quite some time. It is really good to see the government, this week at least and for the first time in two years, starting to address the damage that they did to innovation and science over the last two years by beginning to try to rebuild confidence in that sector—that is a good thing. But prosperity and innovation in the future does not just come from the new. It also comes from taking care of the strong industry that we currently have and building it for the future. It comes from taking care of the many ways that a country supports its population and the many industries that support our future—taking care of those as well. Start-ups and innovation are really important, but what we have here is an absolute demonstration of a government that does not understand that what we
currently have is also of value. A government that will actively shut down current, successful sectors is a government that beggars belief.

Let us have a look at what they are actually doing to the shipping industry. What does this bill actually do? It removes 'revitalising Australian shipping' from the objects of the Coastal Trading (Revitalising Australian Shipping) Act 2012. In other words: revitalising Australian shipping is no longer important to this government. They have removed it; it has gone; it does not matter. Revitalising Australia shipping? Not important. It replaces a preference for an Australian flag on ships working along the Australian coast with a complete indifference to flagging. In other words, it allows flags-of-convenience ships to be placed on the same level as the Australian flagged ships.

When you take an Australian flagged ship, you have a ship that is subject to Australian standards of safety, environmental compliance, and taxation and industrial relations both here and on the open sea. You have a ship that employs Australians. There are thousands of Australians employed on Australian flagged ships. If you remove the preference for an Australian flagged ship, what happens is that you will get more and more flags of convenience ships where those ships are not subject to the same standards of safety, not subject to the same environmental compliance and not subject to Australian industrial relations, which means they can pay their crews less and have them work under conditions that would never be acceptable in the Australian way of life. What this means is that Australian flagged ships will not be able to compete with foreign flagged ships and our shipping industry will essentially go completely.

Last month in the Senate inquiry into this bill we heard that the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development had been advising Australian shipping companies that in order to compete in Australia under this proposed legislation, they should drop the Australian flag, register overseas rather than here and sack their Australian workforce—just sack them. That is what the department was advising shipping companies to do when this extraordinary piece of legislation comes into force. We have a government suggesting that companies sack their Australian workforce and employ cheaper overseas labour—an extraordinary thing.

So is this shipping industry a redundant one? Is this an industry that we might see fading in time anyway? Is this a government that is saying, 'Okay, things are changing.' That might be an excuse, but when you look at the Australian shipping industry it is clearly not the case. Australia is an island nation. We are a big one. We have a lot of coast and we are dependent on shipping for 99 per cent of our trade. That is not going to change—in fact, it will probably increase. We have one of the longest coastlines in the world and the fifth largest shipping task of any nation. This is not an industry in decline. This is not an industry that you walk away from as a government, let alone one that you actively seek to crush out of existence. Ten per cent of the world's trade, by weight, is carried by ship to or from Australia. This is an industry that should be a significant part of our economy, as it is now. This is an industry that a decent government would be working to protect and revitalise, not to crush. It is in Australia's economic, environmental and security interests to have a viable shipping industry and it is essential for the thousands of people who are currently engaged in that industry for their livelihood. There are thousands of them.
Is the government following other countries with this strange legislation? Perhaps there are models overseas and the government is saying, 'We'll bring our shipping legislation or regulation in line with that of other countries.' That also might be a reason. But, again, if you look around the world to equivalent countries, it is not the case. In fact, we would be alone in this. Comparable nations all strongly regulate their coastal shipping for national interest reasons—that is, domestic shipping, or shipping from one port to another within their borders. They have the kind of regulation that Australia currently has, which provides preference for their locally flagged ships. This includes the United States, which, via the Jones Act, bans foreign ships and crews from its coastal trade. Canada, Japan and the nations of the European Union do so similarly. In fact, Australia already has a coastal trading policy that allows participation of foreign ships where an Australian ship is not available. So we are already more flexible in our approach to preference for Australian ships than comparable nations. We already have legislation which many in the shipping industry would probably argue should be strengthened to bring them into line with comparable nations. We are already less regulated than our comparable nations. This piece of legislation will essentially remove all of that protection and wipe out what is an incredibly important industry.

Let us have a look at what the effect will be. It is not an overstatement to say that this legislation is Work Choices on water. In fact, it is worse than Work Choices on water—WorkChoices essentially reduced the wages of Australians; this essentially wipes out the jobs of Australians. So it is probably an understatement to call it Work Choices on water. Eighty-eight per cent of the government's estimated savings from this bill are due to the sacking of Australian workers, replacing them with 90 per cent foreign crews being paid Third World wage rates. Eighty-eight per cent of the estimated savings comes from sacking Australian workers. What a government! They would walk into this place and argue for that; they would deliberately set about developing a policy where they openly admit that 88 per cent of their estimated savings are due to the sacking of Australian workers. The government's official modelling does not account for the cost of lost Australian jobs, lost local spending and local tax and higher welfare spending resulting from the sacking of those workers. The government's official modelling assumes that removal of Australian workplace standards will occasion significant sackings, including in Tasmania and in the Australian cruise sector based in northern Australia. Again—new head, same rotten carcass of a government. It is job destroying every day and continuing to do so this week in spite of the new rhetoric.

What should happen here? What should the government be doing here? I would argue that the fact that ships are plying our waters does not make them a different case than the trucks that ply our roads. It would not be acceptable, and Australia would be up in arms, if suddenly we allowed foreign registered trucks that did not meet our safety standards or our industrial relations standards to ply our highways and put Australian trucking companies out of business. We would not allow it. The population would be up in arms. In fact, there would probably be members of the government—even this government—who would be up in arms if that were the case. Yet this government is prepared to do that on our waters.

The issues with this legislation are not just with the jobs themselves but also with environmental protection. Australian flagged ships have very high environmental standards, especially in heavily used areas like the Great Barrier Reef. Recent incidents such as those of the Shen Neng in 2010 on the reef, the Pacific Adventurer in 2009 off the Sunshine Coast and
the *China Steel Developer* in 2015 off Mackay—all foreign flagged vessels—underscore the risk that we put our natural assets in when we take this path.

There is also a security interest which is worth mentioning. We have a government that talks the talk—and has done for two years now—on security interests, but the screening of foreign crews is nowhere near as comprehensive as the screening of Australian crews. The Office of Transport Security acknowledges this. Without the kind of screening that this country needs in our waterways to keep us safe, there would be many more foreign sailors moving in and out of our ports.

On the whole, this is a dreadful piece of legislation that will decimate an incredibly important industry and that will leave thousands of Australian seafarers and their families in a position where they are much worse off than they are now. We will see our environmental protections weakened and our security protections weakened. I would urge the government, with its new head, to perhaps use it to rethink. It is not a good sign of a new supposed change in direction to be sitting in the House today debating a bill that will remove jobs from so many Australian workers in such a deliberate way. I condemn the government for this bill.

**Mr WILKIE** (Denison) (17:14): There has, quite rightly, been a lot of discussion today, including by the member for Parramatta, about how the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 will result in significant job losses. That is a very important dimension of the debate and a very important downside to what the government is trying to achieve here—thousands of Australian workers in the maritime industries will lose their jobs.

But I would like to just focus a little on my home state of Tasmania, because those job losses—and I think the member for Parramatta made the point—will have a disproportionate effect in Tasmania. In fact, by some estimates, some 230 Tasmanians will lose their jobs as a direct result of this bill becoming law—230 workers in a state of just 500,000 people. Let us put that in perspective: that is smaller than the Gold Coast-Tweed Heads area; it is only a little bit bigger than the population of Canberra and only a little bit bigger than the population of Newcastle and Maitland. That is the size of the population in Tasmania. But 230 Tasmanians will lose their job as a result of the decision of this government if this bill eventually becomes law.

Tasmania is a state with a soft economy—a state where there have already been quite large job losses across a number of sectors in recent years. In fact, as a result of the decisions of this government and the previous government, 198 staff from the CSIRO in Tasmania have lost their jobs. As a direct result of the decisions of this government, dozens of staff at the Australian Antarctic Division have lost their jobs. As a direct result of the decisions of this and the previous government to not send defence work to the Prince of Wales Bay Defence manufacturing precinct in my electorate of Denison, we have not grown the economy and we have not employed more people. As a direct result of this government deciding not to spend $16 million of economic stimulus in the Glenorchy city area, which was promised through Cadbury before the last election, the economy there will not grow; it will stay soft; more people will not be employed. In fact, just last week Cadbury announced they are sacking 11 more workers at the chocolate factory at Claremont in Hobart. So we have a soft economy that desperately needs good public policy—desperately needs good decisions by this government. Yet here we are today talking about a bill which, if it becomes law, will directly
result in thousands of Australians losing their jobs and over 200 losing their jobs in the small state of Tasmania.

It does not need to be this way. We do not need to deregulate the shipping industry in this country. We do not need to open up our coast to a free-for-all for foreign flagged vessels with cheaper crews. We do not need to take away the current requirements in the existing arrangements for companies shipping goods between domestic ports to first seek out an Australian vessel, which is the requirement under the current legislation.

Why we would do this beggars belief. It beggars belief! There is only one group of organisations and people in this country that will benefit from this, and that is business and business owners. It does not need to be this way, because this is ultimately a direct attack on Australian workers and a direct attack on the unions. Yes, fair enough: the current government has an ideological aversion to organised labour and to the unions—and, in particular, to the Maritime Union and the Institute of Marine and Power Engineers. But they should not let that ideological position result in bad public policy. It is as simple as that. They can think whatever they want about organised labour, but they should never let that dislike for organised labour result in bad public policy—particularly bad public policy like this bill that will result directly in thousands of Australians losing their jobs.

But do you know what? Even if the current government does want to look after its mates in big business, it is still missing the target in this case, because the current arrangements that are about to be axed, if this bill becomes law, will include the favourable tax breaks—the tax treatment—that had resulted in SeaRoad, a major Tasmanian corporation, deciding to buy two more vessels to a value of about $100 million. SeaRoad have already been on the front page, or near on the front page, of the Mercury newspaper saying that if this bill does become law then the purchase of those two new vessels, which are very important to that company—an investment of some $100 million—will not go ahead.

It is not good enough for some members of the government or for the Tasmanian members of the Liberal Party to stand up and say that this bill has overwhelming support in the community. It does not. It certainly does not have support from SeaRoad, who are likely not to invest $100 million as a result of this bill. It certainly does not have the support of TT-Line, which operates the two magnificent red and white ferries that travel between Victoria and Tasmania, which many members of this place have travelled on. Perhaps if the members of this House who have travelled on the Spirit of Tasmania had thought more about it, they might have realised that in fact TT-Line supports the current arrangements. In fact, TT-Line was one of the most energetic advocates during the previous parliament for these arrangements to be put in place.

Regrettably, this is more about ideology with the current government than it is about good public policy. In some ways, it is a diversion from the big issues.

One of the big issues, undoubtedly, is the decline in the Australian shipping industry. I see that in 1995—just 20 years ago—there were 55 Australian flagged coastal cargo vessels. By three years ago, it was down to 23—it had more than halved. Last year it was down to 18. This beggars belief. We are an island nation. Ninety-eight per cent of our imports and exports travel by sea. Yet we have 18 Australian flagged coastal cargo vessels. This is madness, whether you look at this from the point of view of transport security for industry or of national security in a time of conflict when, perhaps, some companies from some other
countries may not be able to deliver the services they currently deliver. Surely we should be
doing everything in our power to build up the Australian shipping industry. We should be
coming up with policies that result in many more ships. In fact, we should even be
considering the sorts of arrangements they have in place in countries like the United States.

I have heard mention today of the so-called Jones Act in the United States which requires
that all merchandise transported between two ports within the jurisdiction of the United States
be carried by a US flagged vessel, built in the United States, owned by a US citizen and
crewed by American merchant mariners. Instead of debating this bill, why aren't we, in the
public interest, debating the merits of some kind of Jones Act equivalent in this country? If it
is affordable in other countries, surely it can be affordable in this country. Why can't we only
have Australian flagged vessels, owned by Australian corporations or individuals and crewed
by Australians doing all of the shipping between ports on our coastline, including the offshore
energy sector? Why can't we do that? In part because of lack of vision. In part because of an
ideological attack on workers and organised labour by this government. In part because of
lack of ambition. In part because of lack of imagination to work out how to make this work.
Why don't we have very generous tax concessions for companies and people who would want
to make something like the Jones Act work in this country?

We need dozens and dozens and dozens of Australian owned vessels, Australian flagged
vessels, Australian crewed vessels, plying our coasts. That will give certainty for Australian
industry, that will bolster our national security and that will be the behaviour of a rich and
clever maritime nation, instead of the absurdity at the moment where we have only 18
Australian flagged coastal cargo vessels. I am here defending the current arrangements
because they are the best we have and they are under attack, but we should be in here debating
how to fix the current arrangements to make them even more effective, in my opinion.

This bill is also a distraction from another very important issue. I will now bring this close
to home, to Tasmania. We have a very significant shipping problem in and out of Tasmania. It
costs too much to get people, vehicles and freight across Bass Strait. In fact, the cost of
crossing Bass Strait is the single most significant brake on the Tasmanian economy and it is
the easiest to fix. Over recent months, I have heard Liberal Party members and Tasmanian
Liberal Party senators saying that this bill will fix that. That is patent nonsense. This bill will
not solve the problems for Tasmania and the costs of Bass Strait. In fact, if anything, it will
make those problems even worse, because SeaRoad, which I have referred to already—one of
the major shipping lines in and out of Tasmania across Bass Strait—is seriously
contemplating not buying two new vessels and not spending $100 million. Those new and
more efficient vessels would significantly enhance shipping across Bass Strait and would
promise to bring the cost of crossing Bass Strait down to some degree.

I am very concerned that we have had Tasmanian Liberal Party members and senators in
this place and outside, in front of the media and in the newspapers, arguing in support of this
bill. Heavens, I thought the job of a senator, for example, was to stick up for their state. It
turns out that in Australia these days the job of a senator is to stick up for their party and their
party's position, no matter how crazy it is. It would be much healthier for our country if
particularly senators started arguing for their state. If they were arguing for their state, Liberal
Party senators would be arguing against this bill in the Senate. They would be arguing against
this bill because it will cost 230 jobs in Tasmania. They would be arguing against this bill
because it will kill investment by the shipping lines operating in and out of Tasmania. They
would be arguing against this bill for a whole range of reasons. They would be arguing
against this bill because it is a distraction from the fundamental shipping problem affecting
Tasmania, and that is the cost of crossing Bass Strait.

I obviously will not support this bill—I am sure that is quite clear—but I will tell you what
the government needs to focus on. The government needs to scrap this bill. It is a dud. It is
nothing more than pandering to their ideological obsession, with their mates in business, with
their disinterest in Australian workers and with their sometimes hatred of organised labour.
The MUA and the Institute of Marine and Power Engineers have done a lot for their workers
over the decades, and workers in this country are all the better because of the efforts of
organised labour.

I make the point again that it is very disappointing that the government would allow its
dislike or even hatred of organised labour to result in a bill like this, which is fundamentally
bad policy. I say again: the government should ditch this bill. It is a dog of a bill. It is no
good. The government should start a conversation and start to work up a policy and draft
legislation that would bolster the shipping industry in Australia. We need to turn
this around
and get from 18 vessels back to 23 vessels like we had in 2012, and get back to 55 vessels like
we had in 1995, and even more again so that we have certainty for business, more jobs for
Australians and improved national security. Along the way, we need to do everything that can
be done to help Tasmania by fixing the cost of Bass Strait. It is crippling my state and this bill
is a distraction from it.

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (17:29): I too, like the previous speaker, seek to ask the
government to rethink the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and withdraw it. I
agree that this is shocking legislation that seeks to destroy more jobs in our maritime industry.
It seeks to destroy jobs and not create jobs. The bill comes at a time when this parliament and
the Australian community are being asked to trust the government on the benefits of why we
need to have free trade. We agree with free trade agreements, and we have made that very
clear. But, as we said today in question time, and as Senator Penny Wong, our shadow
minister for trade has said, and Leader of the Opposition Bill Shorten has said publicly, we
need safeguards in place to protect Australian jobs.

We are here again today debating another bill that seeks to remove safeguards that will
protect jobs in our shipping industry, jobs that could benefit from increased free trade. As
people on this side of the House have acknowledged, Australia is an island nation and
depends upon shipping for 99 per cent of its trade. You would think we would be booming
and there would be tens of thousands of people employed in the shipping industry in
Australia. With all the talk about our growing exports, with the continual lift in the numbers
that the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources stands up here and delivers every
single day, you would think that there would be a proposal for increased jobs in the shipping
industry, but there is not.

What this government is not telling the Australian people, what they are trying to slip
through in this parliament, is sneaky legislation that seeks to take away jobs in the shipping
industry. That is what this bill does. It introduces what they call flags-of-convenience ships,
which will basically see cuts in wages and conditions. It will see foreign-crewed vessels
coming into the Australian industry with workers who are paid much less than Australian
workers. It is 'Work Choices on water' and it will cost the thousands of jobs we have in our shipping industry.

I would like to take a moment to read out some of the comments of the people who are at risk of losing their jobs, the very people that this government seeks to make redundant as a result of this legislation. These are the words of Alex Kirby, who spoke to a group of us in Brisbane. He works in the maritime industry. He is one of the workers who was sacked by Hutchinson Ports in Brisbane. He said he would like to take the opportunity to share his story. He is typical of a seafarer, of a worker on the docks and of an MUA member. I know when I say that word it scares the hell out of the government, because it is true that they do not like organised labour and they do not like unions. Who is Alex? He declares that he is an everyday working class man with a fantastic wife and a beautiful nine-year-old daughter at home. He says: 'These two ladies rely upon me to provide them with a home, food, clothing and all the essentials. I have been fortunate enough to do this successfully until now, because I was terminated in the middle of the night via email. Our family had no time to prepare financially. Our family had no time to mentally prepare for what happened to us.'

This is why governments matter. Governments are here to ensure fair, safe workplaces. Governments are here to ensure that we have workplace laws that ensure people's rights are protected so that workers who work in the maritime industry, or any industry, do not go through what Alex and so many of his co-workers went through on the Australian docks. Why is this relevant to this debate? It is relevant because the government is seeking to take away the reforms that were introduced by the former Labor government that protected and ensured Australian flagged ships and Australian wages and conditions.

When Labor took office in 2007 the Australian shipping industry was in a state of decline. Despite the fact that our exports were increasing and that we were increasing our imports, Australian shipping was in decline, meaning that Australian jobs—good quality, well-paid jobs—were in decline. Under the Howard government the number of Australian flagged vessels working the domestic trade routes plunged from 55, in 1996, to 21, in 2007. I cannot believe that it fell to 21, and, as we heard from the previous speaker, it is now down to 13. We are an island nation, a nation where we should be seeing an increased number of ships. We should be seeing an increased number of Australian-flagged ships and Australians working on those ships. If this government is serious about generating jobs during increased export/import trade arrangements, then back the Australian shipping industry and ensure that Australians get to benefit from those free trade agreements and that Australians in shipping get their jobs.

But what we have seen from this government and all of the backbenchers who have spoken about this, is that they are interested only in their mates in business. They are interested only in lowering costs for their mates in business. The way in which they are lowering costs for their mates in business, through trade, is in this bill. They are allowing flags-of-convenience ships, foreign-crewed ships, to come in and take the jobs of Australian flagged ships and Australian seafarers. What will that cost people? They are doing that by undercutting wages. Yes, Australian seafarers earn a high wage. They are high-skilled and they have been through training, even to having security permits and licences. It is expensive and quite often they either pay for it or their company pays for it. These are costs that Australian shipping
companies and Australian seafarers bear themselves. If you are a foreign-flagged ship you do not need to have these particular costs. That is one of the ways in which they are undercutting.

We have also heard from some of the other speakers today about the appalling wages and conditions of some of the people who are working on these foreign-flagged ships. At the moment, and earlier this year, there was in fact a coroner's inquiry into what had happened where three Filipino workers had tragically lost their lives. That investigation is ongoing. So, not only do these foreign-flagged ships undercut the wages and conditions of Australian seafarers but they also are not safe. The safety standards and guarantees are not the same as Australian-flagged ships, which puts them at a competitive advantage.

The labour reforms, as I have said, introduced certainty and made sure that good wages and good conditions were at the forefront of our shipping industry. The aim was to support the Australian shipping industry within our own borders. It is something, as other speakers have said, that has occurred in other countries such as the United States, which this government tries to follow so often when it comes to health care and education but not when it comes to Australian shipping. As we have heard, the Jones Act in the United States was very similar to what Labor did in government. It ensured that, on the domestic seafaring route, United States seafarers had the work. In fact, the Jones Act went one step further and said that, if you wanted a ship sailing the domestic route in the United States, it also had to be built in the United States. Isn't that a positive proposal? Wouldn't it be great if the government got behind ship manufacturing in this country? Rather than deregulating the industry and having flag-of-convenience ships, wouldn't it be great if this government got behind similar legislation to the Jones Act whereby the ships were built here and flagged by Australians so that they had the benefits of these agreements?

The government likes to preach about the importance of trade. Let all Australians share in that trade opportunity, not just big business. Let Australian workers share in that trade by encouraging Australian-flagged vessels, rather than what we see in this bill, with the proposal to have wages and conditions undercut by foreign-flagged vessels. It is against our national interest for this bill to pass the House. The national interest of having an Australian industry is built on three tenets. It is very important to our security to have an Australian shipping industry. It is very important to our environmental interests. Whether it be in the north, around the Barrier Reef, or in the south, it is so important for environmental reasons that we ensure that we have an Australian shipping industry with Australian pilots navigating the Barrier Reef and Australian pilots sailing into our areas. This is why it is so critical that the government backs down on this reform and ensures that we have an Australian shipping industry and that Australians are involved in the Australian shipping industry.

Debate adjourned.

BUSINESS

Rearrangement

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science) (17:40): by leave—I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the member for Canning making a statement immediately and that the member speak without limitation of time.

Question agreed to.
The SPEAKER: Before I call the honourable member for Canning, I remind the House that this is the honourable member's first speech, and I ask the House to extend to him the usual courtesies.

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (17:41): It is a tremendous honour to stand before parliament as the representative for the people of Canning and to speak for the first time in this chamber. I stand here today humbled by the occasion—humbled that, through a democratic process that I love and have defended, the people of Canning have been inspired by what I and my party stand for and have voted for me to be their representative. This responsibility does not sit lightly upon my shoulders, but I accept it with the same sense of duty I felt in making my oath as a member of the Australian Defence Force over a decade ago. I was sustained in my previous profession, through good and difficult times, by holding to the ideals and tradition of the Australian Commonwealth. My belief in the nobility of politics and the importance of the work conducted in this chamber will sustain me through the seasons of political life.

There is no one word that can accurately depict the electorate of Canning. One thing is clear: the geography is decisive in the formation of its culture and economic diversity. In a single day, you can traverse the electorate and find yourself on the beach in Mandurah, picking fruit in orchards up in Karragullen, strolling in a bustling shopping centre in suburban Armadale, saddling a horse at Coolup or enjoying a tree change in the hill country of Dwellingup. Canning is a thriving ecosystem with hardworking Australians who enjoy their freedom and lifestyles unique to each township. The people of Canning generally want to get about their business without undue interference from government. I seek to serve them in this way, while acknowledging that government has a vital role to play in improving their lives.

My personal journey is a typical Australian story. My forebears were migrants from Scotland, England and Ireland. They were mariners, businessman, entrepreneurs and professionals who came to Australia because they saw it as a land of opportunity and a new beginning. Years later, Australia is still the land of opportunity, and we have a responsibility to ensure it remains so. I believe that good things are easily destroyed but not easily created. The most profound influence in my life has been my family. Family is central to a healthy society, and we must protect and cultivate that institution. Family gives people support when they falter and allows those who falter to recover themselves. I have grown up in a stable and loving environment, given to me by my parents, Peter and Sue. My father, from my earliest days, has taught me the importance of seeking the truth and living consistently with my convictions; to establish my principles and adhere to them. My grandfather on my father's side bequeathed to me the virtues of courage and love for my country. His example of bravery and devotion to duty under fire has always inspired me. He served as an officer with the Royal Australian Air Force and was severely wounded by gunfire when covering the air-sea rescue of two downed Australian airmen during the Pacific war. A United States medic aboard the Catalina aircraft, a Virginian by the name of Sergeant O Maberry, managed to stabilise him and an American surgeon at Morotai Island saved his life. For my family, Australia's relationship with the United States has personal significance. My grandfather, Flight Lieutenant Norman William Hastie, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions on that day.

I was born in regional Victoria in Wangaratta. My father started a church there from scratch in 1980 and in my early years I travelled around the vast parish that fell in the federal
seat of Indi, connecting with people from all walks of life in homes and hospitals and on farms and fruit orchards. I have fond memories of those times with my father. My siblings—Sarah, Madeleine and David—and I grew up in a public setting. Both my parents were visible figures in their local community in Wangaratta, Victoria and later in Ashfield, Sydney. They exposed my siblings and me to people from all walks of life through their leadership and hospitality. My parents and grandparents instilled in me a sense of service from an early age. My mother was a primary school teacher, helping many, including those with special needs. She showed me the truth in the words of Winston Churchill:

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

Growing up, I was also very close to my Grandmother Rose. She was a nurse her whole life and looked after my grandfather until he died.

I believe there is an unwritten contract between the dead, the living and the unborn. We are the product of those who have come before us and we should always seek to steward what we have for the next generation. It is the lessons and experiences of my parents, my grandparents and my great-grandparents that have shaped my upbringing. It is because of my formative experiences that I believe in service—not through a cold sense of duty and obligation, but rather service inspired by love and compassion for others. Through my parent's example, I have come to cherish the pursuit of truth, the value of human life and the soul, the power of the spoken and written word, and the importance of history. These have become passions of my own and they are foundational to what drives me as a person.

As a student of history, I have always held a very keen interest in the turning points of civilisation. A turning point in modern history and in my own life was the attacks on the World Trade Centre on 11 September, 2001. I remember watching it unfold on television that night. That morning in New York, a 27-year-old Australian woman, Elisa Ferraina, perished on the 106th floor of the northern tower. Elisa was the daughter of the late Mrs Julia Ferraina, my second and third class teacher at Ashbury Public School. Terror had touched my life and entered my personal world. I had to respond. Interestingly, it was the bizarre reaction from some of my university colleagues the following day, where in a tutorial they mounted a moral equivalence argument against the United States and in support of the terrorists, that led me to make a decisive career choice. From then on, I knew my future lay with the Australian Defence Force.

My formative experiences as a leader have been with the Australian Army on operations. It has been a privilege and honour to command Australian troops and to forge lifelong friendships with people from backgrounds very different from my own. I have seen the best and worst of human nature in conflict and I have felt the heavy burden of command responsibility. I am now far more circumspect about the ability of military power to change people and societies and far more aware of how resilient culture can be in the face of nation-building at gunpoint. Politicians who contemplate sending young men and women into foreign lands would do well to reflect on this truth about war, especially in view of its extreme violence and long-term effects. We have a duty to treat our service personnel and their families with honour, respect and compassion. They pay a high price for our protection and as a society we have an ongoing duty to tend their wounds and heal their scars.

The Australian Defence Force has invested significant amounts of public money into my training as a leader. I have been taught how to build a team. I have been taught how to
identify a problem, create a solution and then work closely with others to get things done. I have not been afraid to ruffle feathers when needed and I am no stranger to accepting responsibility. These are all things that I believe will benefit both the people of Canning and the nation.

Like many Australian students, I studied the history of the 20th century in high school. We studied the first and second world wars, with a particular focus on the rise and collapse of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. I was captivated by the political questions posed by this bloody epoch of history. What is the purpose of government? What are the best political and economic systems for the flourishing of society? How do we avoid the bloodshed of the last century as we stare into the unknown of the 21st?

These questions have remained at the forefront of my interest. I share Michael Novak's view, given in his 1994 Templeton Prize address, where he said of the twentieth century—the bloodiest century in human history:

Three great lessons have been learned from the last century, then, even if the cost of learning them was fearful beyond measure. First, truth matters. Second, for all its manifest faults, even absurdities, democracy is better for the protection of individuals and minorities than dictatorship. Third, for all its deficiencies, even gaping inadequacies, capitalism is better for the poor than either of its two great rivals, socialism and the traditional Third World economy.

Twenty-one years later, with war and disorder raging in Iraq and Syria and with vast numbers of refugees and people from the Middle East looking for safety and opportunity, these words still ring true—perhaps more than ever. The Australian government has acted at this critical juncture with generosity and goodwill by offering a home to 12,000 Syrian refugees. I am proud of this policy and it reinforces my belief that Australia has much good to offer on the world stage.

I believe that government is manifestly a search for order in our lives. It is at the foundation of Australian society: people freely associating and forming bonds of trust, accountability and obligation. We see this present in the family. We see it present in rotary clubs, schools and churches, in business and in the football clubs around Australia. These freely formed associations are the basis of Australian society and are the fullest expression of self-government.

At the centre of these associations is the idea of accountability. One idea that lies at the heart of Western civilisation is the idea of sacrifice. The primary acts of sacrifice at the human level, in the common Christian tradition, are those of confession and forgiveness. These acts go to the heart of individual and collective accountability. We confess when we have wronged others and, in doing so, we sacrifice our pride. We forgive others who have wronged us and, in doing so, we sacrifice our resentment. This is the basis of accountability in our relationships.

We do this with family but also in public settings. Public accountability is manifest in our Westminster system of government. Every voter has a free say at the ballot box. When you consider the rest of the world, this is a special kind of freedom that we enjoy in this country.

By contrast, when society is organised from the top down by heavy-handed government and faceless bureaucrats, accountability disappears. Remember the disarray when the USSR collapsed, or the chaos that ensued in the fall of Iraq, or, more recently, the power vacuum left
by Gaddafi in Libya. Our institutions reflect a cultural heritage that promotes accountability, freedom and democracy.

But while we always need to be wary of creeping state power and big government, we must not forget that our system of government is made possible by a shared consensus across Australian society about basic values and morality. The Australian Liberal Party federal platform captures some of the core beliefs held by most if not all Australians—a belief in the innate worth of the individual; a belief in the basic freedoms of thought, worship, speech, association and choice; a belief in a just and humane society; and a belief in parliamentary democracy as the best system for the expression and fulfilment of the aspirations of a free people.

If Australian society coheres on basic questions of individuality, freedom, opportunity and justice, then there will be cohesion in the political and economic order. We can have a politics of compromise because we all hold the same basic beliefs about what makes Australia a great country.

Last year I had the pleasure of sharing a flight from Canberra to Perth with the member for Fraser, Dr Andrew Leigh. We discussed many issues, and while we disagreed on quite a few of them we were able to reach points of consensus on an equal number, as political neighbours. I was heartened by the tenor of the conversation and it is in that spirit of compromise that I will seek to work with those opposite.

But the politics of compromise is possible only if we share a consensus of beliefs. The most immediate threat to this consensus is a culture of public relativism. We are told that there is no such thing as truth, that all opinions are equal and that our heritage is no more unique than any other cultural achievement. I reject this culture of relativism on both moral and intellectual grounds, for the threat it poses to our civic culture and because it is rationally, morally and practically unsustainable. In governing this country we need to be anchored by foundational beliefs—a shared vision of basic principles that are faithful to the Australian story. There has been too much cynicism in politics for too long. We need to get back to basics and do the right things for the right reasons. We need to restore people's faith in this country's institutions and in us, the nation's elected representatives.

In Australia, we have great prospects for political, economic and social opportunity. It is the government's role to turn that opportunity into a reality for our families. We are custodians. Our job is to work together for the common good. The people of Canning told me in no uncertain terms that they are tired of fickle and short-sighted politics. They want politicians to see things with clear eyes and to call a spade a spade. They want vision. They want us to get on with the job and work together for the common good.

To safeguard our freedom I believe that the first duty of the Australian federal government is to secure our nation and to provide a strong national defence against enemies both foreign and domestic. As Ernest Hemingway wrote in 1942, after reflecting on a lifetime of participation in war as a soldier and journalist:

I have seen much war in my lifetime and I hate it profoundly. But there are worse things than war, and all of them come with defeat.

For democracies, ill preparedness is not an option. I will always fight to ensure that the men and women who serve this country in our military, law enforcement and intelligence agencies
are well-resourced and supported and are given the right policy frameworks to keep the Australian people safe.

With security comes opportunity, and it is the role of the government to provide investment in infrastructure and create policy that leads to wealth creation, the growth of small business and entrepreneurial activity. It is the role of government to help people who cannot help themselves. Nowhere is this clearer than in the battle against ice in the community in Canning. I have pledged to take action alongside the incredibly hardworking community leaders, rehabilitators, medical practitioners, families, police and concerned citizens of Canning to create a safer community. I will seek to support those already in the fight with funding, coordination and leadership. Together with the people of Canning I seek to provide a way out of drug addiction for those in the grip of this terrible addiction.

The Canning by-election was a remarkable five weeks. Ben Morton, the outgoing Western Australian Liberal state director, commented that it was a fierce political apprenticeship for me. As a political rookie, I agree. I thank him for his support and also the many Liberal Party state parliamentary colleagues and volunteers who ignored the sideshow on social media and instead spent their waking hours doorknocking, greeting constituents, putting up signs, taking phone calls and being a genuine presence for good in Canning.

I am proud to be here as the 10th member for Canning. The late Don Randall was the longest serving member for Canning, and it is due to his untimely passing that I am here today. Don set a great example of parliamentary service in Canning. I encountered Don's legacy wherever I went on the campaign trail. I intend to build on it. Like Don, I will put the people of Canning first.

I would like to thank Senator Mathias Cormann, who set this train in motion. You took the first risk and backed me. I would also like to thank Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Julie Bishop, David Johnston, Michael Keenan, Michaelia Cash, Bruce Billson, Michael Ronaldson, Ken Wyatt, John Howard, Tony Abbott and John Anderson for your generous support during the campaign.

I also want to pay a special tribute to two key influences during my military career. First, I want to thank Rear Admiral James Goldrick AO CSC RANR for his mentoring and leadership throughout the past 13 years. He gave me two pieces of advice for service in the military. The first was to build an interior intellectual life sustained by wide reading, writing and critical thinking. The second was that your first command is about proving yourself to yourself and that every subsequent command is about helping others prove themselves to themselves. This advice has and will continue to serve me well as I serve my community and help its people to strive to achieve their aspirations.

I also want to thank the men and women of the Special Air Service Regiment. The three-week selection course, which I completed in 2010, gives truth to the argument that Australia is indeed a meritocracy. The final phase, named 'lucky dip', is one of the most gruelling activities you can complete in the ADF. After days with no food and little sleep it does not matter what your colour, creed, gender, religion, background or level of education is. What matters is your character, your ability to persevere and your ability to keep your head about you and to see a job through to completion—all the while maintaining a larrikin sense of humour. My experience is that under those conditions some of the most unlikely leaders emerge to take charge of a situation. I thank the regiment for their support and for those
officers and soldiers who have invested time in me to improve me both as a person and as a leader. You know who are. Who dares wins.

To my parents and siblings: your love and kindness through the years has made all the difference. And finally, to my wife, Ruth, and son, Jonathan: I would not be here without your help, encouragement and support. So thank you for the wonderful home and sanctuary you provide me as well as for your saintly patience and unconditional love.

COMMITTEES

Membership

**Mr CIOBO** (Moncrieff—Minister for International Development and the Pacific) (18:05):

By leave—I move:

That members be discharged and appointed as members of certain committees in accordance with the list, which has been placed on the table. As the list is a lengthy one, I do not propose to read the list to the House. Details will be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Question agreed to.

BILLS

Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

to which the following amendment was moved:

That all words after "That" be omitted with a view to substituting the following words:

"the House:

(1) notes the evidence given before the Senate inquiry into this bill to the effect that senior officials from the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development advised Mr Bill Milby of North Star Cruises that for his company to compete in Australia under this proposed legislation, he should reflag to a foreign State, sack his Australian crew and hire a crew on cheap foreign wages;

(2) accordingly declines to give the bill a second reading; and

(3) expresses its support for regulation aimed at revitalising the Australian shipping industry by ensuring that:

(a) the Australian shipping industry operates on a level playing field with foreign ships, based on Australian standards, when working in Australia; and

(b) Australia's vital economic, environmental and national security interests in fostering a local shipping industry are safeguarded".

**Ms CHESTERS** (Bendigo) (18:05): Before I resume, I would like to congratulate the new member for Canning on his first speech and I welcome the many contributions that he will make in this place to the debates that we will be having for the rest of this term. Congratulations.

As I was saying, this bill is Work Choices on water and it fails in a number of places to secure Australian jobs, vital jobs, in the shipping industry. This bill fails the national interest. It fails to ensure that Australia has a strong shipping industry. It fails to ensure that we have good jobs in the shipping industry like we seek to have in other sectors of transport in our
country. It fails the economic interest. We rely predominantly on shipping, with 99 per cent of our trade done by sea. We need to ensure that we have a strong, robust Australian shipping industry. These are good jobs that we could lock in if this government would just drop this legislation and get behind the jobs associated with it.

It fails the environmental interest. Shipping in Australian waters should maintain high environmental standards. It should ensure, through the use of Australian crewed ships, that the heavily used, pristine, important environmental areas like the Great Barrier Reef are crewed and piloted by Australians. We have seen time and time again that accidents have occurred as a result of foreign crewed ships being in some of the most important environmental seaways and waters in our country. This legislation fails the environmental test. Only through having Australian crewed vessels and Australian standards will we always ensure safety and environmental safety on our seas.

This legislation also fails the security interest. We know that screening of foreign crews is not as hard as the screening of Australian crews. I have mentioned already the fact that Australian crews have to have certain licences and certain skills. Foreign crews do not require the same. On those levels this bill fails.

But most importantly—and this is why this government needs to drop this legislation—it fails on jobs. There are 2,000 jobs directly and 8,000 jobs associated with this bill that are at risk and could be lost if this legislation is passed. That is 10,000 good, paid shipping jobs. The government needs to get serious about Australian jobs. You cannot come into this place and rant about the importance of trade and rant about the importance of exports and then not back it in by ensuring that we have legislation and rules in place that protect and secure Australian jobs.

This does exactly the opposite. It seeks to do one thing: pander to the pressures of big business, only focus on costs and not focus on creating and sustaining a viable Australian shipping industry and Australian shipping jobs. It is another attempt by this government to union-bust, to break up and to undercut good Australian jobs with foreign workers and foreign flagged vessels.

I will finish with the words of Alex Kirby: 'I am an everyday working-class man with a fantastic wife and a beautiful daughter.' He wrote this when he was on the picket line on the wharves. 'These two ladies rely on me to provide them with a home, food and clothing—these essentials—and I have been fortunate enough to do this successfully until now.' These are the workers that this government will be going after if this legislation goes through. This government is not interested in Australian workers. It is not interested in the Australian maritime industry and in locking in and securing jobs. This bill is simply Work Choices on water.

Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (18:10): I wish I could say it is a great pleasure to speak on this bill, the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, but it is one of the more egregious bits of legislation that the Abbott-Turnbull-whatever-comes-next government has brought into this parliament. It just goes to show you that nothing has changed. This is one bill along a continuum of bad legislation under different prime ministers and, of course, a whole range of different faces on the frontbench.

But one thing has stayed the same: the recklessness in the policy making that we are seeing from this government basically around one ideology. The member for Bendigo hit the nail on the head when she said that this is Work Choices on water. As she finished she said this is all
about getting the unions. They are so intent on getting the unions and so intent on getting unionised Australian workers—in this case, seafarers. They are so intent on doing that. Let's make no mistake, 88 per cent of the regulatory savings presented in this bill, 88 per cent of the regulatory savings supposedly reaped by the community, are actually the wages and conditions of Australian seafarers.

I wish I could say that this is something that is old, something that has been around forever and that Australian conservatism has always been this myopic, but it has not. I remember vividly the Ships of shame report from 1992 because it was one of the first parliamentary reports that I ever read. I must have been a very keen and avid young Labor participant. I read this report and I moved a number of motions in Young Labor because I was so amazed at the state of seafaring around the world. It was such a mess. Flag-of-convenience workforces were treated terribly. Environmental standards were completely ignored and only existed on paper. Insurance standards only existed on paper.

The maintenance of rust bucket ships that were left to sail the oceans of the world, including Australians sea lanes, was documented in the Ships of shame report, a report by this parliament. It was done by a bipartisan committee and it was a bipartisan report. John Anderson was on this committee, so by no means was it a Labor report. There was no dissenting report in it. It was a report of this parliament that was presented to this parliament unanimously. The way it introduces itself in chapter 1 should be of interest to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, because, of course, you are a Western Australian. Point 1.1 of this report says:

On 21 July 1991 the bow section fell off the Greek registered oil tanker Kirki while enroute from the Arabian Gulf to Kwinana in Western Australia.

It fell off. The bow of the ship fell off into the ocean off the coast of Western Australia. It was an oil tanker, and there was oil spewing out of the front of a bowless ship. There was a massive hole in the front of it. It was not as big as one might conjure up in one's imagination, but it was a big hole. There were high seas, and it was laden with 82,660 tonnes of light crude oil and was 55 miles of the Western Australian coast.

The ship did not sink and its crew was rescued. Were it not for the bravery of the Australian recovery crew who went on and secured that ship then this report would have something very different in it. It would be talking about an environmental disaster that would have been etched in Western Australian memories and etched in Australian memories, because the bow of the ship would have fallen off, the ship would have listed uncontrollably and it would have broken up, and 82,000 tonnes of light crude oil would have been off the Western Australian coast. That is the consequence of having unseaworthy ships registered under flags-of-convenience with poorly trained, poorly paid and often abused crews. That is the consequence of that system. You play the lottery if you allow flags-of-convenience to just roam around your sea lanes without appropriate measures to prevent disasters like this.

The Ships of shame report at point 1.2 states:

This ship should have been structurally sound. It was in class with a reputable classification society and had been regularly inspected. Yet it suffered a major structural failure due to corrosion which had gone undetected by the classification society, the ships managers, charterer and the crew. Consequently, the lives of the crew were put at risk and the coast of Western Australia and the marine environment faced a major pollution threat which was only narrowly averted.
Point 1.3 goes on to the competence of the crew et cetera. So we have these very good parliamentary reports—the Ships of shame report and its subsequent report Ships of shame: a sequel, another bipartisan report done by the same committee. It should echo in the mind of the Leader of the House, if he were here or was listening, because he was on that committee with that follow-up report.

Yet, what do we have this government bringing in today? We have them bringing in a bill that implements Work Choices on water and sacrifices Australian sovereignty, Australian sea lanes, to these rust buckets, to the international standard of the flag-of-convenience. We have these Liberal members from Tasmania who have the memory span of a goldfish. They would not know about the Ships of shame report. They would not know what the Kirkki was. They do not remember the more recent maritime issues that we have had off Newcastle and the Great Barrier Reef and, frankly, they do not care. All they care about is this moment. You wonder what goes through their heads. You hear some of their rhetoric and you think to yourself: 'They're not really thinking about the national interest. They haven't done much research or looked into this issue.'

It is a very, very important issue because it goes to the heart of our national sovereignty, so much so that the home of the free market, the United States, has the Jones Act, which protects US coastal waters and the ports within them from flags-of-convenience, from foreign competition. Indeed, for any island nation, you would think that it is kind of important to have some national capacity to move your own goods around your own ports. Indeed, it is important to have some national capacity, some Australian flagged ships, in times of national emergency. It is kind of important, you would have thought. Most Australians, if they were listening to this, would think: 'That's a sensible proposition. Protect the environment from rust bucket flags-of-convenience ships, these ships of shame. Protect the national interest, the national sovereignty, by guarding our own sea lanes,' which is no different to any other section of the Australian nation. As the member for Grayndler pointed out, the equivalent is to say that you should allow trucks from any other nation to go down our highways. Why have a licensing system? Why have Australian registration? Why not just adopt the standards of the rest of the world? It will be cheaper. And that is what this is supposedly all about—that it is cheaper, that there is some sort of efficiency to being unsafe, to not guarding your national interest.

It is an extraordinarily short-sighted proposition from this government—the Abbott-Turnbull or is it the Turnbull-Abbott government? Mr Abbott has been sitting up there all week like a Cheshire cat. The corridor just down from my office is sort of the 'corridor of tragic souls', the cast-offs or the lazy Susan, or something like that, I think, it was at the time, that the now Prime Minister made. This is extraordinarily short-sighted legislation that has come into the parliament. Nothing has really changed for this government. They are so determined to get at the unions and to get at some poor Australian sailors. I have a few in my electorate and they are good Australians. They care about the country. They work hard. They are away from home a lot.

Of all people, politicians should understand the consequences of being away from home. You might do it, but the rates of pay for Australian seafarers are reasonable and they have to be to attract Australian workers. But if you just throw it open to the rest of the world, to the rest of the world's standards, you will soon find things dropping—environmental standards,
safety standards, national security standards. You cannot tell me that a ship that is unsafe, unseaworthy, with a crew that is underpaid, treated appallingly and sourced from god knows where with god knows whose standards is not going to be a national security question when it docks at ports. We know that is the major way illicit goods come into this country. We know they come through the docks, in one form or another. They come from overseas, in one form or another. Yet this government, which prides itself on national security, tells us they are out there protecting us all.

We have just heard the member for Canning's first speech. It is a good day for him. He talked about making sure that the police and the ADF have all the tools at hand to protect this country. Yet on either side of his maiden speech is this bill that completely deregulates Australian shipping to the standards of the rest of the world. We know the consequences of that for our national security. We know the consequences of that for our environment. We know the consequences of that for Australian workers and wages. It is an appalling proposition.

There are reports that are within living memory; they are not lost to the parliament. It is interesting to read these reports. Recommendation 11 of the Ships of shame report is:

The Federal Government deny entry to ships which do not meet ILO 147 standards in relation to crew employment conditions from trading in Australian waters.

The tenor of this report and its later recommendations is about lifting the rest of the world to our standards, not degenerating to theirs, not falling to the lowest common denominator. It was a bipartisan report of this parliament and was taken seriously.

My friend and a person I greatly respect, Paul Neville, later served on that committee and did a very good job for this country. I have served on that committee. So you wonder what is going through this government's head—if anything is going through its head. All they seem to care about is chaos and division and who gets to be a minister. I am very glad for Minister Ciobo, at the table. He was lifted to greatness after all that time being a parliamentary secretary. I always felt sorry for him, because he picked poorly in the past. I know what that is like. I digress.

Mr Butler: We should all form a club!

Mr CHAMPION: Notwithstanding the humour at the table, this is a terrible bill. It should be shelved. That would be the ideal thing. It should be binned in the national interest. Perhaps those backbenchers from Tasmania with a memory span of a goldfish should go back and read the reports by their predecessors. They were good reports and protected the national interest. (Time expired)

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (18:25): I am pleased to follow the member for Wakefield on this Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. He is absolutely right. This is terrible legislation. That would be the ideal thing. It should be binned in the national interest. Perhaps those backbenchers from Tasmania with a memory span of a goldfish should go back and read the reports by their predecessors. They were good reports and protected the national interest. This legislation is not just about shipping—although it focuses on shipping—it is part of the coalition's ongoing strategy to dismantle Australian industrial laws and drive down workplace conditions and wages. It is also about trying to destroy the Australian unions, particularly the Maritime Union of Australia.

Work Choices is not dead—and buried and cremated—as the former Prime Minister has said; it is simply dressed up differently and implemented by a new team. Since its election, we have seen this government watering down labour-market testing for 457 skilled visa entrants.
We have seen the outsourcing of Australian contracts to other countries. We have seen foreign workers being allowed into Australia under special provisions in free trade agreements. We have seen the use of student and working-holiday visas being distorted and rorted. We have seen the expansion of the Seasonal Worker Program. We now have a campaign to remove penalty rates and we have seen the outsourcing of government jobs. All of those measures, collectively, go towards putting downward pressure on wages and workplace conditions. They are measures designed to force Australians to work for lower rates, for longer hours and with less protection.

When you put all those pressures on workers, they cannot complain. If they do, they will lose their jobs to people who—either out of desperation or because they are overseas workers prepared to work at a lower rate—are prepared to do their jobs. That is exactly what this government wants, as a means for pushing down wages and conditions.

This legislation is not about productivity, efficiency and competitiveness as the government would have you believe. Australia is, indeed, an island nation and our waters form part of our economy, our economic zone. Within those waters we have mineral exploration, fishing and tourism, and they all contribute to the Australian economy. The Australian shipping sector is an important industry sector, because Australia depends on it so much.

This legislation enables foreign vessels to operate within what we would normally refer to as Australian waters, doing Australian work. It begs the question: would the government have considered doing exactly the same with our land-transport systems? Would we have allowed foreign trucking companies to come into this country using their labour to carry the cargo we see carried across Australia every day? Would we have allowed foreign companies to come in and not only run our rail systems but also bring in their own labour to do it? Would we have done the same with our internal air services? We would not. The Australian people would not have tolerated it and would have made it absolutely clear that this is not what we want to see here. They would have wanted to ensure that whatever jobs were created in this country went to Australians first. And yet this legislation does exactly the opposite. It effectively says that when it comes to shipping—one of the industry sectors of this country—it is okay to allow foreign vessels to come in, and with those foreign vessels will undoubtedly come foreign workers.

There are other concerns about this legislation that I will hopefully get to in the time that I have, but the bottom line of this legislation is that it will cost Australian jobs. As we have seen with other decisions of this government, caring for and protecting Australian jobs seems to be at the bottom of the agenda. We have seen them decimate the car manufacturing industry in this country. This will not only cost tens of thousands of jobs but will also see the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars of research and development that is carried out each year, in addition to the capability that we will lose through the loss of expertise and skills that have been built up over many, many years.

We then have the concern in respect of the environmental risks associated with allowing foreign vessels into this country. I note that in recent years we have had three specific examples—the *Shen Neng 1* in 2010, the *Pacific Adventurer* in 2009 and the *China Steel Developer* in 2015. They were all off the Queensland coast, along the Great Barrier Reef area, and they all caused problems. None of them were Australian ships; they were all foreign...
flagged ships. It is not Australian crews and Australian vessels that are the ones causing problems for us, it is the foreign flagged vessels. Equally disturbing is the fact that many of those vessels, from allegations made, are crewed by what is virtually slave labour. Certainly, we cannot prove it because we cannot get onto the vessels because they do not come under Australian jurisdiction, but those allegations cannot simply be dismissed. I will come to that a bit later on with some other facts that I find very, very concerning when it comes to literally outsourcing our shipping in this country.

If a foreign vessel comes into Australia and is able to undercut the current price and cost of Australian ships, the most likely reasons it is able to do so are that it can cut wages, it can probably have fewer staff and it can probably make those staff work for longer hours. Again, it cannot be proven, but they are, in my view, the only real areas where real cuts can be made, and from the reports that I have heard that is exactly what happens. When you do that to the crews, they have no interest in ensuring that the ship operates and complies with all the regulations of this country. They simply will do the job that they are forced to do and not complain or say anything about it.

Apart from exploiting their crews, we also know, from a report released only this year by TRACE International—an antibribery and compliance firm—that shipping is exposed to more corruption than any other industry. If that is the case, again, you would think that the government would want to be very, very careful about what it does with industry sectors in this country and the decisions it makes when it comes to the outsourcing of shipping within Australian waters. Indeed, I wonder how many of those foreign flagged vessels, even if they were to be licensed, given the contract and allowed to work in Australian waters, would then open their doors and say, 'We are prepared to take on Australian crew.' I doubt very much that any one of them would do that, because as soon as they took on Australian crew, they would not only be under the watchful eye of Australians who probably would care about what the ship was doing but, more importantly, they would also have to pay them Australian wage rates, and that in turn would make them unviable given that they are operating on cheap or Third World labour, as many other speakers have also alluded to.

I had a quick look at where most of the vessels of the world are registered. My understanding from the most recent list I could get is that Panama has about 25 per cent of the world's registered fleet. Liberia and the Marshall Islands follow. I also noticed that most of the developed countries that are large shipping fleet owners register their ships in one of those countries that I alluded to. In fact, as of 2009 the top five flags account for some 50 per cent of the world's deadweight tonnage in terms of shipping. That says something to me as to what is going on when I look at those lists and see where all of these ships are registered. I am happy to list the top 10 countries that appear on that list: Panama, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Malta, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Cyprus, Cambodia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Gibraltar, Belize and it goes on. They are all countries that one would have concerns about in respect of the way they would operate their fleets. That is exactly why they are countries where ships are registered—countries that, I have no doubt, do not maintain either the shipping standards or the employment standards that we do here in Australia. This government would be fully aware that they are the most likely places where the ships would be registered and possibly crewed from, and yet it is prepared to say: 'That's okay. You can come into our waters and you can take the jobs of people within Australia.'
Productivity gains do not come from driving down wages or bringing in cheap labour. What that might do is increase the profits of business, but I doubt very much that it is the smart way to improve productivity. There are better ways; there are a smarter ways. As the member for Perth also made very clear in her press release today, what we will inevitably see is a loss of skills in the maritime industries of this country, because as the shipping work diminishes so will the jobs and so will the skills that go with them. That is something that we should be deeply concerned about. We have not only seen it in the car-making industry; we are also now seeing it in the shipping industry. It just makes me wonder: where will this government stop? When will this government realise that it is in the national interest to maintain those skills and to have the ability to make things in this country, to produce things and to market things to other places in the world?

I want to finish with some comments that were made in the minister's speech. The minister's second reading speech on this was filled with flowery rhetoric and vague control and compliance statements. I want to quote some of the words he used: 'simplified permit system' and 'complex and burdensome licensing system'. If those were the problems, one could fix permit systems and licensing systems without sourcing the work to foreigners. Clearly, those were just an excuse for doing what the government wants to do. Then we have comments like these:

... a greater range of cruise ship services around the coast ...

... ... ...

... ships trading predominantly in Australia have Australians undertaking the key skilled positions on board.

... ... ...

... where these ships engage primarily in domestic trade, in domestic waters, they are covered by domestic workplace relations arrangements.

Lastly there is the comment:

... if a foreign ship is predominantly operating in Australia—that is, for more than 183 days ... in a 12-month permit period—it will be subject to domestic workplace relations arrangements.

Who is going to monitor all of those things? I doubt very much that the government has allocated additional resources to do that. If the government truly believes that the ship operators are just going to comply with all of those requirements just because the government writes it into a piece of legislation, then I think the government is clearly deluded. These are operators who know how to manage their shipping fleets, who do so across the world and who, I suspect, know how to get around the obligations imposed upon them. When you have the issue that, after a 183-day period in a 12-month period, they will be subjected to domestic workplace relations arrangements, of course the shipping owners will make sure that, at the end of 183 days, that ship will go somewhere else and do some work in another part of the world, and a new ship owned by the same company will come in and replace it. They are not fools. They will work around these compliance measures and they will do it with ease—not to mention that it will simply not be possible for the government to oversee and ensure that they are complying with the standards that it claims are enacted as part of these measures.

We oppose this legislation and we do so with good reason. It not only destroys an Australian industry but it destroys Australian jobs and it is consistent with the theme of this
government of destroying Australian jobs, driving down workplace wages and conditions and destroying unions in this country.

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (18:40): I rise to oppose the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, in keeping with my approach to this issue on several occasions over a number of years. As the representative of Western Australia's principal general cargo port, as the representative of an electorate that is home to the shipbuilding capacity and innovation of the Australian Marine Complex and as the representative of a community that is also home to the largest branch of the Maritime Union of Australia, I have consistently supported measures designed to strengthen and protect Australian shipping and I have argued against changes that seek to weaken the Australian coastal shipping sector.

In this debate it is imperative to remember the wide-ranging and acute importance of shipping to our country. At a time when many Australians are fortunate to experience international travel by air, we cannot afford to ignore the fact that 99 per cent of our trade is moved by sea, that we bear the fifth-largest shipping task of any nation and that fully 10 per cent of all global trade by weight is carried to or from Australia by ship. That magnitude of shipping work is the responsibility and predicament of an island nation like ours—and for example, in the ability to move both export and import freight by rail and then by sea, or vice versa, to a greater extent than by truck alone. Indeed, we are yet to take full advantage of that opportunity, with all the benefits that such an approach promises in terms of reduced carbon emissions and community impact.

But, as an island nation reliant on maritime trade routes and on the ships that ply them, we also face challenges. We also need to consider the fragilities inherent in our circumstances. The security and certainty of sea freight are essential to Australia's economic wellbeing. More than that, they are essential to our safe and functional existence. We are a nation with a degree of self-sufficiency in a crisis context, but there are some key areas—including the supply of petroleum—in which we are hugely dependent on sea freight. Our defence capacity is also reliant, in times of conflict or in peacekeeping engagements, on the support of the merchant marine. In those situations, Australian flagged ships—owned and operated in Australia, crewed by Australians—assume an even greater value. Other nations, including our No. 1 security partner, the United States, recognise this in their regulatory approach to domestic shipping. Why would Australia, with greater reliance on sea freight and a vastly smaller defence capacity, take a different path?

The enormously significant Australian shipping task is undertaken in this country by some 10,000 workers. It is an industry, a trade, a tradition, that goes back to our origins as a nation. It trains and employs people to the highest standards and, in so doing, helps raise the standards that apply in other parts of the world. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work the Maritime Union does, through the International Labour Organization's Maritime Labour Convention, in active pursuit of safe and fairly paid work for all seafarers—a group of workers who throughout history have tended to be subject to some of the worst forms of workplace tyranny, hardship and harm. It would be a mistake for anyone to think that such practices are gone from the seven seas.

The changes before us put Australian shipping jobs on the block. This bill pursues so-called efficiencies and cost savings only insofar as they can be achieved by throwing Australian jobs to the wind. As I have noted before, the bill's own cost-benefit ratio analysis

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indicates that 93 per cent—or 1,089—of coastal shipping jobs will be lost through these changes, with only 200 jobs created in other industries. We do not need to wait and see how this might pan out if the legislation is passed, because we already have the clear example of the advice provided by senior federal government officials in the department of infrastructure to North Star Cruises Australia. In that instance, a successful Australian-based shipping company that has grown from three to 50-odd employees over a number of years was encouraged to consider replacing its Australian workforce with foreign workers. If the government's shipping regulation vandalism goes ahead, then North Star Cruises Australia, which has a presence in Fremantle, and operates luxury adventure cruises on its yacht, True North, in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, will face competition from foreign operators paying far lower wages, in Australian waters, throughout the 180-day tourist season. Under the proposed legislation, it is only after 183 days operating in Australian waters that foreign flagged vessels will be required to pay employees Australian award wages.

It is instructive to note this key passage from The Australia Institute's submission to the Senate inquiry, which states:

Foreign flagged and crewed ships already have considerable access to the Australian coastal shipping market, making Australian coastal shipping possibly the only service sector facing competition that can use foreign labour while actually operating in Australia. By contrast it is impossible for foreign trucking companies, rail companies or any other service provider to operate in Australia using international labour paid at international rates. As crewing costs make up between 36 per cent and 42 per cent of ship operating costs, this puts Australian crews at a 15-20 per cent disadvantage against international ships in terms of operating costs.

If we want to look down the telescope to see where this bill will take us, let us remember that under the Howard government we saw the devastation of the Australian flagged coastal shipping fleet, from 55 vessels in 1996 to a mere 21 vessels in 2007. The Labor government worked hard to repair that damage as part of its comprehensive review and reform process. As others have noted, the unstinting work of the member for Grayndler helped to create a foundation for a revitalised coastal shipping sector, with proper support and incentives for Australian flagged vessels employing Australian seafarers and a package of measures focused on maritime skills and training.

The health of an Australian coastal shipping industry, the existence of Australian flagged vessels, and the maintenance of Australian shipping jobs for high-skilled, well-trained and properly paid and protected Australian workers is paramount for a secure and sustainable Australian future. And so it is irresponsible and reckless for this coalition government to weaken our coastal and Australian flagged shipping capacity, and thereby create economic, environmental and security risks that no responsible government would contemplate.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (18:47): The Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 is a bill that, by design, will destroy the Australian shipping industry. This is an industry that has been on its knees for some time. It was not saved by legislation from the previous government, but it will be dealt a death blow if this legislation passes; and the reason for that is that the bill, almost in terms, is designed to remove every piece of protection that exists for the Australian shipping industry. You do not need to look much further than the analysis from the government that supports this bill that says, 'Expect 1,000 jobs to go.' I am not aware of any other time in this parliament, in recent memory, where a government has come up and
said, 'Here's a bill that'll cost you a thousand jobs; please pass it.' That is what this government is seeking that we do.

You only have to take a little bit of a step back and look at the history to understand the dire situation that the Australian shipping industry finds itself in. As the Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers have been pointing out, we have lost four Australian crewed ships in recent months, and that follows another four that were lost after the legislation was passed back in 2012. So we now have five ships operating under a transitional general licence, and that is due to sunset in 2017. At least that gives some measure of protection for Australian crews, but what about the situation of Australian flagged ships? Well, we have lost another couple of those since the legislation was passed under the previous government, and so we are left in a situation now where most of the ships operating in Australian waters are operating on temporary licences, and if this bill passes then what is left of Australian flagged ships is likely to go as well. What we will almost certainly end up with, if this bill passes, is an Australian shipping industry that is constituted by a few vessels operating in the Bass Strait. All of this is in an island country—a country that is girt by sea. We will be one of the few island nations that has no shipping industry to speak of. The ships that will run from port to port around the Australian coast will not be Australian flagged or Australian crewed.

There will be expanded opportunities now for what were meant to be temporary visas for foreign seafarers who might come into Australian waters and then go out. That situation is now going to be made permanent. In effect, anyone operating around Australia will be able to use an existing but now newly available category of visa to ensure that the workers on that ship do not have to comply with Australian industrial law.

What is happening here is that not only are we about to see the end of Australian flagged ships operating around our island continent, but also we are about to see the whole of Australian waters carved out from the operation of Australian labour law. This follows previous attempts from this government to do this, some more successful than others, including for people who are working in connection with offshore resource projects. Most people would think that, if a resource project is operating in Australian waters—for example, building a new floating gas platform—and if ships were working in connection with it, the people working on those ships might be governed by Australian labour law. Well, no. This government has gone to great lengths—and we have stopped them a couple of times in the Senate, but they are still intent on flouting the will of this parliament—to say: 'We are quite happy to just carve out whole areas where labour law does not apply.' They have done that with offshore resource projects, and now, with this bill, they are doing it for all the waters around Australia.

We are going to lose not only a shipping industry but a skills base because there will no longer be an incentive for anyone to run Australian crews in ships around our country. So the training for those crews, which currently takes place in various places around Australia, will go as well—that is, the training colleges and the infrastructure that supports them. Can you imagine saying, 'We will allow trucks to go up and down the Hume Highway that do not have to be registered in Australia, the operators do not have to have an Australian licence and the normal rules do not apply to them.' That would be an absurd situation. No-one in this country would tolerate us deregulating the Hume Highway, but that is what this government is doing for our shipping lanes, for our shipping highways around this country. They are saying, 'You
do not have to have Australian registration and you do not have to comply with Australian conditions. This is deregulation and neoliberalism gone mad. This is the Australian government saying, 'We are quite happy to remove any protection, industrial or safety or environmental, that could potentially stand in the way of companies making huge profits. We will remove that from the area surrounding our country.' It is neoliberalism gone mad because it will result in the loss of jobs and it will not result in any net benefit to Australia; it is only going to assist large corporations that can already afford to pay for Australian crews. It will assist them to cut their wages bill by being able to employ workers from overseas in what is, by definition, a mobile industry, where it is possible to go to another port, pick people up and bring them here.

The reason that I say it is neoliberalism gone mad is that not only is it not going to benefit Australia but our trading partners are not doing this. This is not the direction that other countries are going. Other countries that have substantial coastlines are doing the opposite. The government would know that, in the US free trade agreement that exists with the US and has been in place for some time, the US specifically reserves the right to regulate its own coast and do what other governments are doing, like Indonesia, and that is say, 'This is an economic opportunity for us. If we regulate what happens around our coastline, we can create jobs for people.' I reiterate that you would think that most people in Australia would think that, if you are taking something from one port to another in Australia, it would probably be done by an Australian crew and perhaps an Australian ship. There is not only the opportunity to regulate it and provide jobs locally but we could raise revenue as well. That is what other countries do. They say, 'If you operate in our waters and you move things from port to port, then we will charge you for that and we will raise revenue from it.' Other countries have successfully combined a successful shipping industry with a revenue stream. So the government is not only about to smash jobs and smash an industry; it is about to do itself out of money at a time when the Treasurer tells us repeatedly that the budget is under pressure.

What we do know is that it will not only hurt jobs and hurt potential revenue streams but it will make the area around this country less safe. The government tells us, 'No. It's okay. We will make sure nothing happens,' but, if you look at the number of shipping occurrences reported to the Australian Transport Safety Bureau in 2005 to 2012, you can see that 611 vessels registered in other countries were reported, which is almost triple that of reports for Australian vessels. So we lose the ability to regulate in the way that we would like for economic benefit but also for environmental benefit and safety benefit, because we know what the consequences are when something goes wrong. We are dealing with potential oil spills. We are dealing with potential damage to areas like our reefs. We are dealing with potential damage to some of the most important parts of our environment that Australians love and want to have protected. Why risk our fisheries, why risk our coastal environment and why risk our Great Barrier Reef simply so that companies that are already making a lot of money can make a bit more?

Crucially, we are in many ways about to give up our sovereignty over what happens in the waters around us. We will perhaps become the first island nation to no longer have the capacity for a merchant navy in the way we used to, and we could also become the first island nation that says, 'We don't mind if this area around our country is serviced by people who are not from this country and return no economic benefit to this country.' That is an astounding
proposition from a government that is confronting high unemployment rates and especially high youth unemployment rates when it should be searching for new ways of ensuring that people in Australia get some benefit from the natural resources available to us. That should include moving from port to port around this country, following the lead of places like the UK and at least being in line with what the likes of the US are doing, looking more closely at places like Indonesia and saying, 'There is an opportunity for us. There is an opportunity to not only save jobs but save the shipping industry and raise money as well.'

The fact that this government comes before this place with a bill that it shamefacedly says is going to cost 1,000 jobs is reason enough to oppose it, but I urge this House and also the other place to send the government back to the drawing board and say, 'We have massive opportunities, economic opportunities, if we want to protect our shipping industry and nurture it. We only have to look at other countries.' That is the direction we should be taking instead of this, which will smash the Australian shipping industry.

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (18:59): As with so many of my colleagues I rise tonight to speak against the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and to raise significant concerns about this government bill. This is a bill that removes revitalising Australian shipping from the objects of Australian coastal shipping legislation. It is a piece of legislation about which the government ought to be ashamed, because it replaces preference for an Australian flag on ships working the Australian coast with indifference to flagging—that is, flags-of-convenience ships that are then to be placed on the same level as our own Australian ships and Australian-flagged ships. When a ship has an Australian flag it is subject to Australian standards, but the flags-of-convenience arrangement will allow ships to avoid Australian standards and regulations.

As so many Labor speakers have said in the debate on this bill, Labor's position is quite clear. If you are hauling freight by rail you are entitled to the benefit of Australian regulations, Australian protections and Australian workplace protections. If you are hauling freight by truck, then you are entitled to Australian wages, to Australian conditions and to the benefit and the protection of Australian regulations. We believe that if you are hauling freight by ship you should have the same entitlement to be protected under Australian law and have the benefit of Australian regulations and Australian workplace laws.

This is yet another issue where the differences between the coalition and Labor are so stark. We believe in Australian jobs. We stand up for Australian jobs and no amount of silly name-calling by the coalition will ever stop us, as Labor people, from standing up for Australian jobs. Whether it is this 'Work Choices on water' legislation or whether it is the discussion we are having about the implementation of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement, where Labor is standing up for Australian labour market testing and skills testing and the coalition does not care about Australian jobs. They would rather call us racist for daring to stand up for Australian jobs than actually really engaging with the underlying issues there.

If you think about the coalition's record when it comes to standing up for Australian jobs and Australian workers, this is 'Work Choices on water'. This is all about taking away pay and conditions from workers. Look no further than their original Work Choices, the legislation that was so comprehensively rejected by the Australian people at the 2007 election. Like this legislation, that was all about undermining the pay and conditions of Australian workers. It was legislation that was all about dividing and conquering. Look at the track record of the
coalition by looking even further back to the first years of the Howard government and the attempt to bring in the Work Choices style legislation at that time. Obviously, it took a coalition majority Senate for the then coalition government to get their wish and implement Work Choices, the radical right-wing industrial relations reform that was introduced. It was so radical and so right-wing that it was completely inconsistent with Australian values and the Australian people rejected it utterly and completely, and that is very obvious. But they have not learnt. They do not care about industrial relations benefits for working people. They do not care about pay and conditions and they do not care about Australian jobs.

If you want another example of that, look at the comments the Prime Minister has been making about penalty rates recently. They are talking about penalty rates as though they were some sort of anachronism and were just not needed any more, as though the weekends are the same as any other week day. As Ged Kearney of the ACTU has said, when they play the grand final on a Tuesday morning then you can tell me that weekends don't matter any more. We had a pretty good grand final for Queensland supporters recently, and I can tell you it was not played on a Tuesday morning. It was an excellent game and it was on a Sunday. Sundays do mean something. Workplace relations protections mean something. Penalty rates, for that matter, mean something. When you talk about cutting penalty rates you are talking about cutting the pay of low-paid workers and of middle-income workers.

The Prime Minister's attempt to backpedal this week, with his claim that he was just talking about enterprise bargaining, has been completely transparent for everyone. Of course we have enterprise bargaining. We have had it broadly across this country since the Keating and Brereton reforms of 1993. But the Prime Minister was not talking about negotiating better conditions and building on the conditions to leave working people better off. That is not what he was talking about. He was talking about cutting penalty rates for working people. When you talk about cutting penalty rates for the person who is bringing you your coffee or the person who is making your brunch when you sit in a cafe, you are talking about cutting the pay of some of our lowest paid workers. It is not good enough. It is not good enough to say that low-paid workers should get a pay cut.

It is a matter of fact that in this country lower paid workers, people at the bottom of the income distribution, have benefitted proportionately less than people at the top of the income distribution from the benefits of Australia's growth and from the boom we have had the benefit of over recent decades. It is a matter of fact. If you have a look at a recent report from NATSEM for Anglicare Australia, they modelled the effect of some of the Abbott/Turnbull government changes, looked at the changes moving forward and looked at the likely living standard projections for the future, and, on the projections they considered, not only do you see people in the bottom end of the income distribution benefitting less from Australia’s prosperity than people at the top of the income distribution, but in fact what that modelling suggested is that people in the bottom 40 per cent of the income distribution would actually see living standards decline over the next decade. Not only would inequality continue to grow, but it would actually leave households worse off over the next decade, compared to where they are now. That is not good enough. But that shows you just how little this government cares about living standards for everyday Australian people, for people particularly at the bottom and middle of the income distribution, but not those at the top end of town.
It shows you how little they care about the cost of living pressures on households that they would even consider suggesting that low-paid workers, people who are reliant on penalty rates to make up their wage, take a pay cut. They are out of touch. This is an out of touch government led by an out of touch Prime Minister, people who have no idea what it is like to have these pressures discussed around the table. This example, this job-destroying legislation that we are debating tonight, is yet another example of just how out of touch the Prime Minister's government is in relation to jobs and working conditions.

As I said, we are a party who stand up for Australian jobs. We have always been a party who stand up for Australian jobs. We believe in making sure that people are not vulnerable to exploitation. The whole point of this legislation is to remove protections to allow people to get around Australian protections and regulation. That leaves people open to exploitation. Our shipping industry, which employs 10,000 Australian workers in direct and indirect roles, is an industry in itself. It deserves a regulatory regime that allows it to operate on a level playing field. That is what happens in every other industry, including, as I said earlier, in road and rail, and also in airfreight. This is an industry, like any other industry, where if you work in Australia you should have the benefit of Australian wages and Australian conditions and you should have the benefit of the protection of Australian laws.

When Labor took office in 2007, the Australian shipping industry was in a state of decline. Under the then Howard coalition government, the number of Australian-flagged vessels working domestic trade routes plunged from 55 in 1996 to 21 in 2007. Labor introduced new laws designed to revitalise the Australian shipping industry which followed on from unanimous recommendations of a 2008 parliamentary inquiry and extensive consultation with stakeholders. The aim was to support the ability of the Australian shipping industry to compete within its own borders. The package included taxation incentives for flagging ships Australian and to encourage employment of Australian seafarers, a new second register with tax benefits to ships engaged predominantly in the international trade, coastal shipping reform, and a workplace package focusing on maritime skills development. Since the day it was sworn in, this government has promised to repeal these laws, undermining their effect and deterring investment in Australian-flagged shipping. Uncertainty has had the effect of continuing the decline in the Australian trading fleet.

This bill is all about ripping apart those reforms and removing the level playing field for Australian shipowners operating in their home waters in the coastal trade. It removes support for the industry and replaces it with nothing—and isn't that typical of the coalition government, with their reckless approach to industry policy, which has seen a terrible effect on Australian jobs? And they do not care. As you will recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, the then Prime Minister mentioned that some workers who had lost their jobs as a consequence of industry change had been 'liberated' from their jobs. How contemptuous—how disrespectful to say that they had been liberated from their jobs. I am sure that there will be opportunities to reflect on that sentiment.

We are an island nation—the point has been made by everyone who has spoken in this debate against this bill. We have a greater interest, as an island nation, in a viable local maritime sector than most other nations. We have an economic interest, we have an environmental interest and we have a security interest. These interests are undermined by this reckless legislation. We have an economic interest because we rely on shipping for 99 per
cent of our trade, including an increasing amount of our petroleum supply. We have an environmental interest because of course we need high environmental standards in a nation famous for the Great Barrier Reef and also for having amazing natural resources—and I might say particularly given our increase in tourism as such an important service export industry for this nation, which is only becoming more important as time goes on. We have a security interest. We know that screening foreign crews is harder than screening Australian crews. The Office of Transport Security acknowledges this, but a higher risk profile is not factored into the costs of this package. Given that each of those three interests is undermined by this legislation, that is, in and of itself, a sufficient and important reason why this bill ought to be opposed.

It is a bill that, really, has at its heart ideology, not an evidence base. Members of the coalition have spoken in this place before, saying, 'Policy should be evidence based.' When are we going to start seeing it from the coalition? When are we going to see laws that actually reflect the needs of this nation, the needs of Australian working people and the importance of protecting Australian jobs, instead of this sort of ideological nonsense? When are we going to see it? Now is a time when unemployment is as bad as it has been for decades. We have 800,000 people on the unemployment queues in Australia. We have a situation where, since May 2014—not so coincidentally, the same time as the coalition government's first budget—unemployment has been six per cent or higher, worse than the worst unemployment rates during the global financial crisis. Unemployment is a disgrace in this country. The coalition government should stop worrying about ideology and think about what is going to be done to protect Australian jobs and Australian working conditions.

I do not hold out much hope for that because, if you look at the track record—the track record of then Prime Minister John Howard in 1996, the track record of Work Choices in 2006 and the track record of the current Prime Minister's recent discussions and comments about cutting penalty rates—the fact is that the real reason that this government will never really stand up for Australian workers and Australian jobs is that, at its heart, it does not care about Australian jobs and Australian working people's pay and conditions. At its heart, it is completely out of touch with the pressures around kitchen tables in the households of Australia. At its heart, it knows that we have increasing inequality. This government knows that living standards are going to decline for the bottom end of the income distribution if policies do not change, but it does not care. This government is a government that thinks, 'My mates are all right.' When people are at the bottom end of the income distribution and rely on protection from Australian regulation and rely on Australian wages and conditions, this government just does not think that those people deserve its attention.

We disagree. We will always stand up for Australian jobs. We will always stand up for fair workplace laws. We will always stand up for a fair day's pay for a fair day's work—a basic tenet that this country was built on. We will always stand up for Australian jobs and Australian pay and conditions.

Mr MARLES (Corio) (19:14): I rise to oppose the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill because it is yet another example of a job-destroying piece of legislation from the Turnbull government, which has set itself against working Australia. It is a government by the coalition of the Liberal and National parties, which have as part of their DNA an attitude of setting themselves against working Australia. We see that, and we saw that through the Work
Choices legislation under the then Howard government. From the moment this government was elected in 2013, we have seen act after act and decision after decision made by this government and actions taken by this government which have destroyed Australian jobs. This is just another example of that. We saw it in the way the former Treasurer, Treasurer Hockey, goaded the Australian car industry out of the country—an unprecedented action, from a treasurer of this nation, inviting the major car companies of this country to leave, in effect. In my electorate, being a car-making city, we feel the significance of that. We saw it with the decision of Alcoa, again in my electorate, to cease smelting aluminium at its plant at Point Henry.

When these events happen, we see nothing from this government in terms of trying to deal with the economic adjustment which is required by people when major decisions of this kind are made. When Ford made its decision to stop making cars in Australia, the then Labor government acted, on that very day, to put in place a package of adjustment for both Broadmeadows and Geelong. Today, Geelong is yet to see a single dollar dedicated to it for the readjustment that needs to occur in our city by virtue of the decision that was made by Alcoa. This legislation, in relation to the shipping industry, is just another example of that.

Australia needs a shipping industry. That, more than anything else, is why I stand here today opposing this legislation. We need a shipping industry because 99 per cent of the trade back and forth between Australia and the world is done through shipping. Indeed, that shipping back and forth from Australia represents something like 10 per cent of the global trade in shipping. It is a remarkable figure and it explains how significant the shipping industry and the shipping task is in Australia and why, of course, it is so important for us to maintain a shipping industry in Australia. None of this is a surprise. We are an island nation. We have one of the longest coastlines in the world. For so many reasons—economic, environmental, security—it is important that we maintain a shipping industry, particularly in terms of coastal shipping.

Shipping as an industry was on the decline under the Howard government. In 1996, when John Howard was elected Prime Minister, there were 55 Australian flagged vessels plying their trade along the Australian coastline. By the time John Howard lost office in 2007, the number of Australian flagged vessels had been reduced to 21. When we came to office in 2007, we were faced with the task of trying to revitalise this industry that is so critical to Australia's economy and national security. Through a parliamentary inquiry in 2008 and then extensive consultation by the then Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Anthony Albanese, we worked to the point of producing a package of reforms that were introduced in 2012—reforms which sought to bring back a shipping industry in this country and sought to plot a path for a viable shipping industry long into the future. We did that because the shipping industry mattered to us as a Labor government, as indeed the industries of this country and working Australia matter to us as Labor members in this place.

That package of reforms included such measures as tax incentives for Australian flagged vessels which also sought to provide encouragement to Australian flagged vessels to employ Australian workers. It involved the creation of a second shipping register, which provided for international carriers to and from Australia. It also sought to put in place workplace packages which focused on developing maritime skills so that we maintained the skills base for this industry, going into the future.
All of this was the result of significant consultation within this important industry. All of this was designed to ensure that we could have a viable shipping industry long into the future. But, from the moment that the coalition were elected in 2013, they set themselves against those reforms and in the process set themselves against the shipping industry and, as I said, against working Australia. We have seen this government make every effort to try and undermine the package of reforms that was put in place by the former Labor government. This bill seeks to rip the heart out of those reforms. That is why I stand here tonight opposing the bill.

This bill, to its enormous discredit, will remove the term 'revitalising Australian shipping' from the objects of Australian coastal shipping. That is an appalling and retrograde step which says everything about the intent of this legislation. It removes any preference, in any form, for Australian flagged vessels along the Australian coastline, in effect putting Australian flagged vessels on the same footing as flag-of-convenience ships that will be on our coastline.

Understanding what comes with an Australian flagged vessel is not rocket science—Australian workers on it; the money generated by that enterprise going into revenue through paying Australian tax; and, importantly, Australian industrial relations conditions persisting as the law, as it were, on such a ship. An Australian flagged vessel is required to employ people under Australian conditions of employment. All of that is placed under threat in circumstances where, by virtue of this bill, an Australian flagged vessel will be put on the same footing as a vessel with a flag of convenience—a vessel which has none of those obligations, a vessel whose enterprise will not see tax being paid into the Australian taxation system. Indeed, the economic modelling which supports this bill and talks about the savings that will come through the associated regulatory changes indicates that 88 per cent of the savings are based on the assumption that 90 per cent of Australian crews on ships doing coastal work will be replaced with crews that will be paid under terms and conditions of employment that would persist in the developing world. In our view that is an utterly unacceptable situation.

It is expected from the government's own modelling that the consequence of this bill will be the termination of employment of people earning Australian conditions of employment, Australian wages, throughout the shipping industry and particularly in places like Tasmania and particularly in the cruise ship sector in northern Australia, in places such as Cairns. As I said earlier, it is a job-destroying piece of legislation. It is an appalling piece of public policy. But it is entirely consistent with the way in which this government has gone about its business from the moment that it was elected. In essence, this legislation represents Work Choices on water. That is what we are talking about here. Right now the industry has a 10,000 strong workforce, and they are the people who will be subject to the effects of this legislation.

The logic of our position is very clear. We are simply saying that, just as Australian conditions apply to road and rail, because of course all those workplaces are in Australia, they should also apply to our blue highway, to coastal shipping, as well. This form of transport should exist on exactly the same terms, on exactly the same playing field, as road and rail. There is a logical sense to it. We would never, as a country, walk down the path of opening up those other modes of transport to the extent that developing world levels of employment existed within them. We would never think of doing that in respect of road and rail and we
should not be doing it in respect of sea, and yet that is precisely what this legislation is seeking to do. That is why I stand here this evening opposing it.

Opposing this legislation does not in any way make us an outlier in terms of the accessibility of work on our coastline. Indeed, other countries around the world, for example the US and Canada, Europe and countries like Japan, all seek to regulate the shipping task on their coastline, and they do so bearing in mind that that industry carries with it a significant national interest—a significant national interest in an economic sense and in an environment and security sense as well. In many respects right now, without this legislation, without this these amendments, we already have comparatively open seas in terms of our coastal shipping task which do allow foreign flagged vessels to work along our coastline in circumstances where there is no Australian flagged vessel able to operate. The effect of this legislation, the effect of this bill, were it to be passed through this parliament, would be to see foreign flagged vessels placed on exactly the same footing as Australian flagged vessels, which would be an enormous threat to the ongoing viability of the coastal shipping industry and therefore the shipping industry in this country.

We need a local shipping industry for many reasons. We need it from an economic point of view. As I mentioned earlier, 99 per cent of trade to and from Australia is done via shipping so it is important that we retain a local shipping industry. We need to do it from an environmental point of view. It is no coincidence that most of the recent environmental disasters that we have seen around our shores have occurred by virtue of non-Australian flagged vessels—the Shen Neng in 2010 on the Barrier Reef, the Pacific Adventurer on the Sunshine Coast in 2009 and the China Steel Developer in Mackay earlier this year. All of these were non-Australian flagged vessels, and they caused significant environmental damage. So for environmental reasons it is important that we retain a local shipping industry. We need to do so for security reasons as well. Quite evidently there is a higher risk profile in respect of non-screened crews working on ships around our coastline, and it is much harder to screen crews who are on non-Australian flagged vessels. Again, that is not a particularly difficult point to make but the result of this legislation would be that our security position was reduced. Of course our Navy benefits significantly from having a strong merchant fleet participating in a strong domestic shipping industry. For all these reasons we should be opposing this bill—this bill represents a challenge to the local shipping industry.

Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (19:29): It gives me no pleasure at all to speak on the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill, but I do support the second reading amendment moved by the member for Grayndler. As people know, I am a member from Tasmania, the island state of this great island nation of ours. Tasmania is reliant, perhaps more than most other parts of Australia, on shipping. As our economy grows and our exports increase, shipping becomes more important to our island's prosperity.

This bill is important for Tasmania and it is important for workers, including Tasmanian workers. Around 10,000 Australians are directly and indirectly employed in the shipping industry today. That is without any related jobs. This bill is important because the majority of the savings that have been identified by the government in this bill—in fact, 88 per cent of them—relate to reducing Australian workers' wages and to replacing those workers with a 90 per cent foreign crew. That is the detail in this bill. It specifically says that savings to businesses will amount to $21.4 million a year and that $19 million, or 88 per cent, of those
so-called savings come from the change in wages. That is out of the $85 billion production value of this industry. A very significant saving comes from the change in wages.

Regrettably, the government has not modelled the full cost of the impact of this amendment bill. Specifically, its official modelling does not account for the cost of the lost Australian jobs. It does not account for the lost local spending and for the taxes that those workers would have paid. It does not account for the higher welfare spending that could result from workers being laid off due to this legislation. We know this will happen because of the evidence put before the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee's inquiry into the bill.

In sworn evidence, Mr Milby of North Star Cruises said that the government's plans to allow foreign flagged vessels paying Third World wages to undercut Australian vessels on Australian coasts would damage his business. He said he had discussions with officials from the department of infrastructure, who told him that the best way to remain competitive under the changes was to register his vessel overseas, sack his Australian crew and hire foreign workers on lower wages. That is the advice that Mr Milby claims he was given by the government. It shows that what we are saying about the changes in this bill is correct. It shows clearly that the savings are coming from changes in wages.

Specifically, part 4 of the act which this bill amends, which creates the existing system of preference for Australian ships, is being repealed and replaced with a section that says that foreign flagged ships will not be required to pay Australian-level wages until they have spent more than half the year—that is, 183 days—in Australian waters. These new arrangements do not subject non-Australian ships to Australian workplace standards. They do include a requirement that overseas vessels employ Australian citizens, residents or holders of a working visa in two senior roles only: as either master or chief mate or as either chief engineer or first engineer. But, again, that is only after 183 days working around our coast in Australian waters.

Labor's position on this bill has been clear: workers in Australia, moving freight in Australia, should be paid Australian wages and operate under Australian workplace health and safety rules. It should not matter how freight is moved, whether by rail, by trucks on roads, or by sea: the workers moving that freight should be paid Australian wages and come under the same conditions. That is what should happen. Everyone who works in Australia should be paid in accordance with Australian conditions and legal requirements.

I want to go specifically to the contributions made in this place and in newspapers in Tasmania by the Liberal members for Bass, Braddon and Lyons, who are supporting these changes. They are supporting a reduction in the wages of the workers on Australian vessels. They clearly do support this legislation and that reduction in wages, despite the member for Braddon understanding the situation in his own electorate, where crew from the Alexander Spirit have been campaigning and talking to the local community about having been asked to take an Australian vessel overseas and to then hand it over, essentially, and not have a job to come back to. The members for Bass, Braddon and Lyons continually assert that Labor's 2012 shipping reforms did not work. But let us be clear: they were never given time to work.

This government has done everything it could since it gained office to undermine our reforms. To go to the history, when Labor came to office in late 2007, the Australian shipping industry was already in a state of decline. Under the former Howard government, the number
of Australian flagged vessels working domestic trade routes plunged from 55 in 1996 to just 21 in 2007. Labor's laws were designed to re-vitalise the Australian shipping industry. But they have been undermined. Our reforms were undertaken after extensive consultation with stakeholders and following unanimous recommendations of a 2008 parliamentary inquiry. All sides of politics agreed the reforms were necessary. These reforms, which Labor then implemented, have been undermined.

The aim of the reforms was to support the ability of the Australian shipping industry to compete within its own borders. The package included taxation incentives for flagging ships Australian and to encourage employment of Australian seafarers, a new 'second register', with tax benefits to ships engaged predominantly in international trade, coastal shipping reform and a workplace package focusing on maritime skills development. Maritime skills development is something we need in this country. It continued to allow participation of foreign ships where an Australian ship was not available. So we had given that consideration.

But, since day one, the coalition government has been promising to repeal Labor's changes, undermining their effect and deterring investment in Australian flagged shipping. The uncertainty created by this government has had the effect of a continuing decline of the Australian fleet.

I want to talk about SeaRoad Holdings, a shipping company in Tasmania, who also went on the record to say that they had decided to invest $100 million in the first of two new cargo vessels—the first of which was due to begin operating on Bass Strait next year. In a submission to the Senate committee examining the legislation, SeaRoad's Michael Easy warned that the legislation would imperil this investment. He wrote that, when seeking bank finance for its expansion, the company cited the strong support for an investment in Australian shipping that was there in the existing legislation. Mr Easy wrote:

It is crucial to our funding arrangements, Tasmania's future and Australia's credibility on the world stage that the legislation acknowledges that the current regime be preserved on Bass Strait.

He is clearly saying that the current system and regime need to be maintained for his substantial investment. That is critically important to Tasmania and our access; it is critically important.

The Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill replaces preference for an Australian flagship on ships working the Australian coast with indifference to their flagging. It will place so-called flags of convenience ships on the same level as an Australian flag. Currently, without these changes, when a ship has an Australian flag, it is subject to Australian standards of safety, environmental compliance, taxation and industrial relations both here and on the open sea, and it employs Australians.

It is in Australia's interests to ensure that we have a local, viable shipping sector. Our interests are really threefold. Firstly, they are economic interests because 99 per cent of our trade comes from shipping, including, of course, our petroleum supply, which is important for Australia. Secondly, they are environmental interests. We have heard from others about our high environmental standards and those incidents that underscore the risk to our natural assets. Of course, those incidents on the Barrier Reef are particularly concerning, with the Shen Neng in 2010. Those crews were not familiar with Australian waters. They were not familiar with Australia's environmental protections. Of course, with their conditions, some of the crews would have been subject to fatigue. They would not have had Australian conditions.
They would not have had the same safety standards on board those vessels. So we do know that environment is of particular interest. Thirdly, there is our national security interest. We have heard and we understand that the Office of Transport Security acknowledges that the screening of foreign crews is harder than the screening of Australian crews. We also know that the government has not modelled the costs of this higher profile of risk-screening that will be required for those crews. That is also not to mention the maritime skills development, which I talked about earlier, and the benefits that our defence forces gain from the skills and support from the existence of a vibrant shipping sector and the people who work in it.

Indeed, comparable nations around the world, such as the US and Canada, and many countries in the EU, all strongly regulate their own coastal shipping for national interest reasons on the three interests which I talked about. Other countries understand how important it is to their long-term viability, to their security, to their environmental systems and to their economies that they have a vibrant shipping industry—but it appears that the current government does not.

The members for Bass, Braddon and Lyons also appear to be supporting the false belief that this legislation will lower shipping costs for Tasmanian firms such as Bell Bay Aluminium and Norske Skog. I want to make it clear that the member for Grayndler, me and Tasmanian Labor senators have all met with these firms, which the members say are struggling with these increased shipping costs. I want people to understand that there is no clear evidence that the increase in shipping costs that these companies are clearly experiencing is related to labour shipping reforms. Indeed, even if it were true that they were solely related to labour shipping reforms, there is no way that the amount of additional wages could be related to the costs that they are talking about. There is no way that they match, so there is no way that labour shipping reforms could be responsible for the increased costs of shipping that those companies are talking about. I would have hoped that the members for Bass, Braddon and Lyons understood that the costs of shipping across Bass Strait are much more complex than that and that they understood how complicated the issues of Bass Strait shipping are. I really think it shows that either they do not understand it—and I would hope that they do—or they are blindly following their party against the best interests of Tasmania. That is my concern about those three members and the comments they have made.

It is for these reasons that I believe this bill should not be supported. I firmly believe it goes against Australia's economic, environmental and security interests as well as against the interests of Australian workers. It is a pleasure to support the member for Grayndler's amendment to this bill.

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (19:43): It gives me great pleasure to speak on the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I would like to start by commenting on a few statements made by the member for Griffith during her contribution. She said—and I think I have got this word for word—'The differences between the coalition and Labor are so stark.' She also talked about the party that stands up for Australian jobs. She said, 'Look at the track record.' That is where I will start. I am very proud to look at the track record of the coalition and that of the Labor Party when it comes to jobs.

The previous coalition government reduced the unemployment queues of this country by 300,000 people. The 300,000 people that were on the unemployment queue back in 1996 were put into employment. Those queues were 300,000 people shorter the during the Howard-
Costello years. They were the years during the Asian financial crisis. Not only did that
government reduce the unemployment queues by those 300,000 people; they also repaid $96
billion worth of debt that they had inherited from Labor, plus an extra $54 billion in interest
that they had to take out of the economy and pay back on Labor’s debt. They put the budget
back into surplus and put money in the bank, and decreased the unemployment queues by
300,000.

Let’s look at Labor’s track record during its six years in government. During that period, the
unemployment queues actually lengthened by 200,000 people. So we had a 300,000 reduction
under the coalition and a 200,000 increase under the Labor Party. They ran up $300 billion
worth of debt despite, at the time, having record commodity prices. Yes, we did have a GFC,
but we had China going gangbusters, with record increases in our exports. Despite that, we
had 200,000 fewer jobs. So I am very pleased to talk to anyone who wants to talk about the
track records on employment of this coalition and of the Labor Party. Already, in the two
short years that the coalition government has been in office, we have seen another 335,000
new jobs created in this economy.

So the track records make it clear. It is the coalition that stands up for jobs and it is the
coalition that gets the economic settings of the economy right so that jobs can be created,
while, on the other side, with Labor, it is all about protection, it is all about regulation, it is all
about central planning. And what do we see time and time again? We see job losses.
Fundamentally, the Labor Party have no understanding of how you achieve sustainable higher
wages in an economy. They have no understanding of how you achieve sustainable
employment growth—by freeing the hands of our small businesses and entrepreneurs to go
out there and invest, innovate and take risks, and to start up new business and employ people.

When it comes to the production of goods and services in this economy, the only way we
can have high wages and the only way we can have more jobs is by the production of goods
and services in this economy being done as efficiently and competitively as possible. That
should be the aim of all governments. Freight is a major cost component in the production of
all goods. Even though any particular industry in any location can be highly efficient and
highly competitive, they still have to get their inputs freighted into their plant and they have to
get their final produce shipped out of their plant. So the freight costs—something they have
very little control over—often have a great say in how competitive and how efficient that
business can be.

As a nation we have many natural resources. We are blessed with that black coal seam that
runs down our eastern seaboard. We are blessed with the gold, iron ore, lead, zinc, uranium,
silver and nickel in our outback. We are blessed with natural gas. We are blessed with forests.
We are blessed with a wonderful system of government—our Westminster system—and our
Constitution. We are blessed with an educated population. But the one disadvantage that we
have is the tyranny of distance. Yes, as Geoffrey Blainey argued, that tyranny of distance has
helped us. It has helped drive innovation. It has helped create for us a nation of rugged
individualists. But the tyranny of distance when it comes to freight and goods is the major
disadvantage that we have in our economy. Other than the Antarctic, being the least populated
continent in the world, for us the cost of freight as a result of that tyranny of distance is one of
the major obstacles that our businesses that produce goods have to overcome. I would suggest
that there is nowhere else in the world, no other nation anywhere else in the world, where it is
more important to have an efficient and competitive transport system. That transport system is made up, of course, of sea freight but also road, rail and air freight. Often, they all combine—which I will come to in a minute. If we have an inefficient system, if we have an uncompetitive transport sector, it will cost jobs, it will destroy wealth and it will make us all poorer as a nation.

So where are we with coastal sea freight in this country? We have coastal sea freight that is in long-term decline. We no longer really ship goods from Sydney to Melbourne by sea. That is not necessary. We have great infrastructure with the Hume Highway. A truck can load up in a warehouse or a factory in Sydney, be about 10 hours on the road and get to Melbourne overnight. We can do the same from Sydney to Brisbane. We have a reasonably efficient road network. Yes, our Pacific Highway does need more work. But our road system from Sydney to Melbourne is actually of an excellent standard. We need to fix up those patches on the Pacific Highway so that we have the same standard going north to Brisbane as we do going south to Melbourne. But our sea freight, our coastal shipping, is in long-term decline. Just look at some of the numbers. In 1996, the fleet of major Australian registered ships numbered 75. By 2005-06, that had gone down to 46. In 2006-07, it was down to just 13. In 2013-14, it had declined to just 15. It is a declining industry. Those 15 ships that are left are ageing, they are less efficient and they are inefficient when it comes to fuel and staffing. The ships cannot compete with modern vessels—with those ships having an average age of 23. So, that long-term decline is continuing.

We saw that decline continue under the policies of the former Labor government. Since Labor brought in their grand plan for the so-called revitalisation of coastal shipping, we have seen a 63 per cent reduction in deadweight tonnage of major Australian flagged vessels. That is from 2011-12 to 2013-14—a decline of 63 per cent. We have seen the paperwork and the bureaucratic system they have put onto industry—about a thousand extra hours in administration per year with red tape. We have seen the number of ships on the Australian transitional general licence drop from 16 to just eight. Overall, from the year 2000 to the year 2012, shipping's share of Australia's total freight task fell from 27 per cent to under 17 per cent.

We are looking at an industry where jobs are in decline and have been in decline for a long time, and that is the Australian coastal shipping industry. The fact that we have an inefficient coastal shipping industry has other effects throughout the economy which cause job losses. The problem is that it is cheaper for a company in Brisbane to import raw product from anywhere in South-East Asia and ship it into Brisbane than it is to ship it around from Adelaide to Brisbane. Having a highly regulated and highly protected Australian shipping industry costs Australian jobs. It does not protect jobs or save jobs; it actually costs jobs in the economy. It makes us as a nation less efficient and it makes us less wealthy overall. That is what this bill addresses. Yes, there will potentially be some adverse small effects to the Australian shipping industry, but it is an industry already in decline. We should not be protecting industries that are in decline, because by doing so we harm the rest of the economy. There are so many industry-wide benefits to this bill that will help our resources, cement, aluminium, fertiliser, petroleum, sugar, grain and many other products which use coastal shipping.
I have come across a few interesting quotes on the proposed changes. I have one here from a company called Gypsum Resources Australia from one of their submissions. They say that their competitiveness in the Australian gypsum market is largely dependent on the competitiveness of its coastal shipping services. If GRA is competitive in sea freight then it is likely to win the business. Whilst GRA's FOB [free on board] costs— that means the cost ex-factory—

and associated pricing is competitive with its [overseas] competitors it has often been unable to compete in the Australian domestic gypsum market due to the uncompetitive GL [general licence] shipping rates which it is required to use under the current Act.

They gave an example. In 2014 they applied for but were denied a temporary licence and that stopped them winning a contract to supply gypsum into Brisbane. They said denial of the licence rendered their tender uncompetitive and most customers were lost to a company from Thailand. There were job losses. They were jobs that should have and could have been done in Australia and it would have been the most efficient way to do it, but, because our costal shipping line was uncompetitive, we lost jobs. There were no jobs in the shipping industry, because no freight was moved—the product came from Thailand rather than Adelaide—and there were no jobs in the Adelaide factory.

It is easy to see how this current legislation, which needs to be fixed and which we are changing, actually costs jobs. I have another quote—this time from Cristal Mining:

We need to stop insisting on a highly regulated, costly and inefficient protectionist environment to attempt to preserve a declining coastal shipping industry because all other Australian industries dependent on coastal freight up being disadvantaged.

The last 30 years of review demonstrate the objective of a viable and sustainable Australian flaked coastal shipping fleet is receding ever further into the distance. That objective although nationally reassuring should not be placed ahead of the economic viability of many other Australian businesses that depend on reasonable cost coastal shipping options. The jobs of a very small number in the maritime sector cannot artificially be made more valuable than those of thousands in the transnational value-adding industries.

The Act, in its current form, puts Australian industry at risk of operational shutdowns and possible job losses.

That spells it all out.

That is why we see the opposition from the Labor Party on this bill. All they are interested in doing is protecting a few of their mates in the maritime union while at the same time sacrificing thousands and thousands of jobs in other sectors of the economy. This is why under Labor jobs are always lost, while under the coalition jobs are created. We govern for the good of the country and the good of the economy. We are prepared to come in here and make hard decisions, rather than fall back on scare campaigns or protect our mates in the unions. I oppose this amendment and I commend this bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Throsby) (19:58): It gives me no pleasure to stand here and speak on the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Further Strengthening Job Seeker Compliance) Bill 2015. I support the second reading amendment wholeheartedly. The former Prime Minister—the former Prime Minister Abbott, that is—said that Work Choices was
'dead, buried and cremated', and I think there were a few stunts to underline that effect. But what we see today is life being breathed back into Work Choices. This is Work Choices on water, as it has been dubbed, and there are pretty good reasons for that. It is called Work Choices on water because this legislation will see the wholesale sacking of an Australian maritime workforce, the driving down of wages and the removal of people who are enjoying Australian wages and conditions and being replaced with foreign workers.

Not since the Peter Reith and John Howard-led Patrick waterfront dispute have we seen such an attack on waterfront workers, on seafarers, on the maritime industry in this country. At least then they had the courage to do it in broad daylight—there were balaclavas and dogs. They are not as visible this time but there are plenty of balaclavas and dogs in the legislation.

Member for Hughes, it was George Bernard Shaw who said, 'The government that tries to rob Peter to pay Paul can always rely on the support of Paul.' Well, the champion for Paul is at the back of the chamber. What he is proposing to do is rob a group of workers to support the profits of the companies that he supports. I argue, and all those on this side of the House argue, that Australia is a better country than that. If we want to improve our productivity, there is a better way of going about it. We made some decisions back in the 1980s that we did not want to be a low-wage, low-productivity country, that we wanted to have good and decent jobs and high productivity. The productivity improvements enhancements we have seen on the waterfront and on the waterside have gone through the roof, through cooperation—

*Mr Craig Kelly interjecting*—

*Mr STEPHEN JONES:* Isn't it interesting how empty tins always make the most noise.

*The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta):* Order! The member for Throsby has the call.

*Mr STEPHEN JONES:* If the member for Hughes wants to learn something, he will find it a lot easier to learn something with his mouth closed. What I hope to do is paint the problems with this legislation.

I am not surprised that there have not been too many National Party speakers on this bill, because they would be ashamed to do it. We all remember November 2013, a few months after the election, where the National Party went to the wall. They went to the wall, in the name of the national interest, to prevent a company—a US backed company by the name of Archer Daniels Midland—from purchasing a controlling interest in GrainCorp. Their concern back then was to ensure that the national interest was protected. They did not want to see a foreign company come in and have a controlling interest in GrainCorp.

Where are those National Party members today? They managed to bust the former Treasurer's arm and roll him, because they thought it was not in the national interest to have a US backed multinational company running GrainCorp, a critical piece of infrastructure loading grain onto ships. But somehow it is in the national interest to have every single Australian worker—

*Mr Craig Kelly interjecting*—

*The DEPUTY SPEAKER:* Order!

*Mr STEPHEN JONES:* sacked from the ships that they are loading grain onto so that not only will you not have an Australian ship; you will not have an Australian maritime worker working on those ships. Somehow that is in the national interest. Is it any wonder that
members of the National Party have not been speaking on this bill? They are too ashamed to do it, because people like me will be calling them out for their hypocrisy.

This legislation is not in the national interest. If it is allowed to pass, it will allow those foreign flagged vessels working between Australian domestic ports for up to 183 days a year to do so by paying Third World wages to their crew. Meanwhile, Australian shipping companies, who are trying to do the right thing and pay Australian-level wages, will be forced out of business—and somehow that is in Australia's national interest. We on this side of the House argue that it is not.

Mariners will be out of work. Unlike the member for Hughes, who has an academic interest in this issue, I come from a region with a port, where hundreds of families rely on wages from Australian seafaring. They are the workers who are going to be thrown out of work. The men and women who put out of Port Kembla on a weekly basis are the people who are going to lose their jobs, because the champions over there for Work Choices on water could not give two hoots about those families.

Those opposite talk about unemployment and they talk about employment. If this bill is about improving employment in this country, it is a very strange way to go about it, seeing hundreds of workers thrown out of their jobs in the name of creating employment. Their track record is not too good on this. This is a government which has seen unemployment grow to its highest level in over a decade. It now has a '6' in front of it. When they came into government, we bequeathed them an unemployment rate with a '5' in front of it, so they have a pretty atrocious track record on this measure.

This legislation is Liberal Party DNA in action. This is their ideological commitment to Work Choices—to destroying Australian jobs and destroying Australian wages and conditions. This is what it is all about. It is a typical ideological agenda from the coalition. They have never seen an Australian worker that they thought was not earning too much. They want to see the cutting of wages and conditions for Australians working on our ships—

*Mr Craig Kelly interjecting—*

**Mr Stephen Jones:** Here is the proof of the pudding. The bellicose member for Hughes up the back, with his academic interest in this issue, gave us a few examples. He did not cite the examples which were brought up in the Senate inquiry into this bill, not a few weeks ago, where we heard evidence that the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development—the minister's own department—has been advising Australian shipping companies that, to compete in Australia under the proposed legislation, they should drop the Australian flag and register overseas. Not only that, they were advised to sack their Australian workers and replace them with crews paying foreign wages. That is their solution. That is not fantasy. That is the evidence—not rebutted—that was presented before the Senate inquiry into this legislation not two months ago. I thought that with the change in prime ministership there might have been a change of heart and a change of policy, but what we are seeing from Abbott to Turnbull is a consistency of policy. There has been no change. If there had been a change in policy, we would not be seeing this legislation before the parliament.

Under Labor, through the Australian shipping reform package of legislation, we saw policies put in place that were going to rescue the Australian shipping industry, because it was in a pretty parlous state. During the Howard years the number of Australian flagged vessels
working our trade routes domestically went from 55 in 1996 to 21 by the end of the reign of John Howard as Prime Minister. We revitalised the entire industry. I will just repeat those numbers, for the education of the member for Hughes: they dropped from 55 in 1996 to 21—slashed by more than a half over their period in government. And they are at it again.

There will not be an Australian flagged ship. That will be the result. But be very, very clear about this: there will not be an Australian flagged vessel, with Australian workers, working our coastal shipping industry if this legislation passes through the Senate. They know about it. They have to be honest about it. They have to be honest in saying, 'This is what we stand for.' In fact, I want to see them. I invite the member for Hughes to come down to Port Kembla, in my electorate, and say: 'I am campaigning to have you guys lose your jobs, because that is what I stand for. I am campaigning to have all of you and your families thrown out of work'—because, make no mistake about it, that is what this legislation means to workers in my electorate.

The changes proposed in this bill will put at risk the jobs of about 2,000 Australian seafarers. More than that, about 8,000 jobs in associated sectors are also at risk. But it is not just the jobs and the economic impacts—and the economic impacts are significant. We are a nation that relies on seafaring for our trade. Most of the goods that we export from this country—and we are an exporting country, committed to trade—are shipped out of our ports on our ships. Many countries in the world would not allow even the situations that we have in Australia at the moment. In the United States of America, for example, under the—prodigiously named!—Jones Act, foreign ships and foreign crews are banned from working in their coastal waters. That is, if you want to ply trade up and down the American coastline you have to do it on American made ships crewed by American workers. They would be looking aghast at the sorts of legislation this government is proposing to put in place today.

In Canada, in Japan and throughout the European Union we see similar sorts of situations. So, we in the Australian Labor Party are not alone in calling rubbish on the bill before the House today, and that is what we are doing. We are calling rubbish. We are saying that this bill is designed to do nothing more than put 2,000 people out of work. It is not just about the jobs and not just about the economic impact; it is about the environmental impact as well.

We have seen numerous examples over the past few decades of incidents when foreign flagged ships, foreign crewed ships that do not know our coastal waters and perhaps do not conform to the same safety standards and risk-management practices that ours do, doing all sorts of things that have put our environment at risk. We saw in 2010 an oil spill that occurred—up your way, Mr Deputy Speaker Vasta—when the Chinese bulk coal carrier the MV Shen Neng ran aground on the reef near Rockhampton. It was found that this ship was over 10 kilometres outside the designated shipping lane. It created a massive oil slick, one of the biggest scars in the reef, off Rockhampton, around 250 metres wide and three kilometres long. Coral bleaching has nothing on the impact of this ship and the impact it could have had on the reef on that terrible day. It was a massive oil slick. Thankfully we were able to clean it up. But this is an example of the sort of environmental risk we face if this legislation passes the House.

We know from talking to seafarers and from the examples that have come before the regulatory authorities that many vessels are taking shortcuts, doing 'rat runs' and not adhering to environmental or occupational health and safety standards, and this is the sort of thing that
is going to be let loose by this government and these members who are shortly going to vote in favour of this legislation. It will see not only 2,000 workers thrown out of their jobs, including the workers who ply the coastal shipping routes out of Port Kembla, in my electorate, and not only the economic damage that will be done by destroying the Australian shipping industry but also the environmental damage that will be done as a result of the lack of standards and regulation that this legislation is going to wreak upon the Australian community.

So, this bill should be rejected. It should be withdrawn from the Notice Paper. And, if it is not, those members on the other side should do the right thing and vote with the Labor opposition to ensure that this bill never becomes law.

Mr GILES (Scullin) (20:12): I too rise in opposition to the Shipping Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, and I am particularly pleased to have been in the chamber for the contribution of my friend the member for Throsby, who touched on a number of very concerning aspects of the bill, not least of which are the environmental risks it presents to Australia and our maritime waters. In joining my colleagues in opposition to this legislation I should make it clear that I am speaking also in support of the amendment moved by the member for Grayndler. I think it is worth touching on that amendment, because it clearly sets out the principles with which we should be approaching this challenge that is before us, in particular noting the very concerning evidence recently given before the Senate inquiry about the engagement of departmental officials in relation to the issue that has had some prominence—the advice given to Mr Milby at North Star Cruises that for his company to compete in Australia under the proposed legislation, the bill we are debating this evening, he should reflag to a foreign state, sack his Australian crew and hire a crew on cheap foreign wages. In light of this as well as other matters, we should be declining to give the bill a second reading.

But the amendment obviously goes further than this and sets out the principles that Labor used to inform our approach to this challenge in the 2012 legislation, working towards the objective of ensuring that this critical Australian industry can operate on a level playing field with foreign competitors and ensuring that our economic, our environmental and our security interests in fostering the local shipping industry are maintained and indeed, where possible, advanced. These are the objectives that we should be concentrating on and, measured against those objectives, as well as the concerning evidence before the Senate inquiry, this bill fails and should be rejected.

It is very interesting, as we navigate our passage from the Abbott government to the Turnbull government, to consider how changes in rhetoric and changes in style appear to be entirely unmatched when it comes to questions of substance. Our new Prime Minister, Mr Turnbull, has spoken with evident joy of the exciting times in which we—or perhaps he—lives. He has also spoken about improving the quality of policy debate in this place. I wonder if the member for Hughes got that memo, based on his contribution both on the bill and throughout the contribution of the member for Throsby. But I am rather more concerned that the responsible minister for this legislation, the Deputy Prime Minister, seems to have failed to have done so. Whatever the new Prime Minister has said, it appears that his government, like that of Mr Abbott, is bereft of ideas. Its rhetoric, evidenced in this legislation, is completely empty. For this government it seems clear that dismantling the work of Labor
governments is as good as it gets, and they never fail to descend to the lowest common denominator. Their answer to everything seems to be reducing labour costs and reducing wages. That is their only solution to every problem.

I looked with some care at the second reading speech of Minister Truss, a second reading contribution that I think can at best be regarded as disingenuous, with the meaningless language of reform and three-word slogans that I thought we had got rid of—the same tired old slogans. When we talk about reducing costs in this bill, we know that those cost reductions are almost entirely, on the government's own evidence, to be found through slashing wages. So we see, in the language of the Deputy Prime Minister, that the government has declared that 'Australia is open for business and these reforms will help reduce the burden on business, open up new opportunities and unlock the potential of our coastal trading routes'. This is a bold claim that is not supported by the government's own material and has scant regard for the human beings, the 10,000 people, directly and indirectly employed in Australia in this industry. Much like the legislation at large, it is also a claim that is not informed by evidence or engaged by any sense of the national interest, whether broadly described, as the member for Grayndler has put it in his amendment, or even more narrowly. It is not concerned about jobs for Australians or security, much less our precious natural environment.

It is also inconsistent with international approaches. The member for Throsby touched on this in looking at a range of comparable nations which have policy objectives very similar to those set out in the legislation that is presently afoot, the 2012 Labor legislation, and very similar approaches to safeguarding their national interests through giving support to domestic shipping industries. These nations include Canada, the European Union and the United States—that market bastion, that example to which we are often taken to by members of this government. New Zealand is another generally favoured example, along with Japan. These regimes are broadly similar in their objectives and also in some of the mechanisms through which those objectives are sought to be given effect to. The system this government proposes will dismantle our shipping industry at cost to Australian industry, at cost to Australian jobs and at risk to Australia's security and at risk to Australia's natural environment. It raises a range of other questions around the so-called change of attitude under the new Prime Minister, particularly as it goes to the wider responsibilities of this minister. I see we have the newly promoted, if I may describe it in those terms, minister for cities at the table, the member for Mayo. I was very pleased to see that portfolio recognised in this government. Hopefully it will assume some of the great Labor legacy in supporting our cities and suburbs through the actions of national government. Again it appears that the comments of the Prime Minister in this regard have not always been echoed by the minister responsible for infrastructure, an issue that is at play here.

But turning back to this bill, it contains three major elements, all of which are deeply problematic. Firstly, and this appears to be its principal concern, it repeals the 2012 reforms implemented by Labor, a broad-based, considered package of reforms aimed at boosting Australian industry. They are a package of reforms that at the very least deserve time to be considered to see how they have fared, particularly as the evidence—such as it is, and recognising that some of the decisions that industry participants make in deals like this take some time to wash through—indicates that these reforms are serving their purpose.
Secondly, the bill would deregulate Australian coastal shipping. Again, as I touched upon earlier, this is a deregulatory agenda that is significantly out of step with those of many comparable nations. In doing so, it would establish a single permit system and expand significantly exemptions from our wage standards applicable here. And, lastly, building on this point: this bill would impose Work Choices on water through extending the non-application of the Fair Work Act. The extent to which the government has sought to render invisible the workers engaged directly and indirectly in this industry, as well as their families, in this debate is extraordinary. They should be heard, and their concerns should be considered as the parliament considers this legislation. I note that the explanatory memorandum suggests that there would be nil financial impact in this regard, but this ignores the direct and indirect impact of these lost jobs, these 2,000 lost jobs—more than the 1,000 on the government’s own evidence. I think a larger number is more likely to be borne out. It will particularly impact communities through lost jobs and damage to families. It will impact on the Commonwealth through the social security system as well as less tangible costs. As I started to mention earlier, I think of the impact on particular regional communities, and it will be more significant in places like ports in Tasmania and places like Cairns.

This is legislation that deserves to be rejected by this House and to not proceed through to enactment. We should think about the broader context of shipping to Australia as this parliament has been consumed with important debates about trade, our opportunities in that regard and some of the challenges it poses to us and to Australian businesses. As we are an island nation, shipping is, of course, especially important to Australia. It is how our goods get to market in the rest of the world. It is also an industry that presently employs, directly and indirectly, around 10,000 people. This bill denies those workers a level playing field. It denies the businesses that employ those workers a fair chance to continue to compete.

I want to go to the first component of this bill: the dismantling of the architecture of Labor’s 2012 reforms. The Labor government took very seriously the challenges facing shipping. Labor continues to do so now. On this point, let me turn to the pettiness of this government’s approach. We see the extent to which the bill before the House narrows the scope of our engagement, narrows the scope of this parliament’s vision for the Australian shipping industry. We see a bill that moves away from any commitment to revitalising Australian industry and that dramatically narrows the scope of the legislation.

Labor, on the other hand, took a broader view built around looking to ensure a level playing field for the domestic shipping sector and fair access to this market for Australian businesses. This was a considered look informed by evidence. There was a parliamentary inquiry from 2008—a unanimous parliamentary inquiry, I might add—exhaustive stakeholder engagement in the following years and a real plan, not blind faith in ideology. We saw a series of thoughtful and considered measures to put in place that level playing field, including taxation incentives and an innovative look at the coastal shipping regime. We saw the shipping register. We saw the workers involved in this industry, through the Maritime Workforce Development Forum, looking to skills development to safeguard jobs for the future. We saw the legislation that took up all those elements of the national interest, those three principles of supporting our economic development, protecting our environment and ensuring, where possible, national security.
This considered approach deserves time to see how it is going. As I touched on earlier, key decisions and key investments are not made overnight. This is particularly so when there is evidence that has been produced to the processes of this parliament that the new arrangements are working. The case for change is not founded on evidence. It is not founded on reality. It is founded on ideology.

I turn now to the deregulation aspect of this bill. Again, it is blind faith. When we consider the references to red tape, we see echoes in the deflating balloon that is the government's red-tape repeal legislation at large as ever more grandiose claims are unsupported by any evidence in the real world. I note again that 88 per cent of the claimed economic benefits to flow from this legislation are said to come from reduced labour costs. This is from the explanatory memorandum. When we consider the regulatory impact statement and the cost-benefit analysis, there is very little in them to commend them. According to the Australia Institute, in the deregulatory benefits we are looking at numbers of much less than one per cent of the industry's turnover.

Again we see a narrow and ideological approach to the assessment that ignores the reality of the challenges facing these industries in a narrow, economic sense—leaving aside those wider aspects of the national interest challenge. We see significant job losses—very significant job losses of good, high-wage jobs—for very little economic benefit, if there is any at all. We also see in this bill more than simply an approach which is heedless of workers and their families' concerns. It is an approach which is deeply concerning, consistent with the evidence, the shocking revelations, about the advice given by departmental officials to businesses, heedless of Australian values, heedless of the concerns of Australian workers.

As the member for Grayndler said in his speech in this second reading debate, our approach to the issues of industrial relations here and elsewhere in the transport and logistics industry in Australia should be very simple: if you work in Australia, you should be paid in accordance with Australian law. You should also be entitled to the benefits of the other conditions that Australian law affords Australian workers. It is deeply concerning that this bill plans to alter the workplace relations environment so that only a very limited number of seafarers would be covered by the Fair Work Act. It also removes the requirements around collective agreements being registered.

This is an approach that, again, is not consistent with that of comparable nations. It is consistent with a blind, reflexive hatred of unionism, a lack of concern for workers and a view about productivity that is all about a race to the bottom in circumstances where we know that labour productivity is not the problem in the Australian economy. Labour productivity is doing okay. Wage growth, on the other hand, is not. For these reasons and so many more we must reject Work Choices on water. We must look at an approach to this legislation which deals squarely with all the dimensions of the national interest. We must continue to follow the Labor approach and reject the bill that is before the House.

Debate adjourned.
COMMITTEES
Joint Select Committee on Trade and Investment Growth
Appointment

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta) (20:28): The Speaker has received a message from the Senate informing the House that the Senate concurs with the resolution of the House relating to the variation of appointment of the Joint Select Committee on Trade and Investment Growth.

BILLS
Social Security Legislation Amendment (Further Strengthening Job Seeker Compliance) Bill 2015
Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (20:28): The Social Security Legislation Amendment (Further Strengthening Job Seeker Compliance) Bill 2015 seeks to amend the Social Security (Administration) Act 1999 to support measures the coalition government announced in its 2015-16 budget. As we have heard from the former Assistant Minister for Employment, the government is seeking to do five key things in relation to job seekers and job search requirements that would come into force from 1 July 2016 with the bill.

Firstly, the bill seeks to allow a job seeker's participation payment to be immediately suspended if that job seeker fails to enter into a job plan. Secondly, it is seeking to allow the secretary of the department to determine, through a legislative instrument, the meaning of 'acted in an inappropriate manner', to determine whether a job seeker has acted in a way such that the purpose of a job seeker's appointment is not achieved and to determine to apply a penalty in such cases. Thirdly, the bill seeks to allow a job seeker's participation payment to be suspended when a job seeker fails to participate in an activity without a reasonable excuse from the instalment period in which the failure is determined not the following fortnight. Fourthly, the bill seeks to allow a job seeker's participation payment to be suspended immediately when a job seeker fails to undertake adequate job search efforts without reasonable excuse. Fifthly, this bill seeks that job seekers who fail to accept work will no longer be able to have their penalty waived by undertaking additional activities even if this would cause financial hardship. The bill also seeks to rename all failures resulting in the short-term financial penalties and suspensions as no-show no-pay failures.

Labor have always supported the principle of mutual obligation. Indeed, it was Labor that introduced reforms that ensured job seekers engaged with employment service providers and met their obligations to find employment. That is, job seekers have an obligation to actively seek work and that the government has an obligation to support them and provide them with the resources to assist them into the labour force. Therefore, Labor will be supporting some of the proposed measures in this bill that more closely align the date of reasonable penalties and suspensions with the date of noncompliance. But Labor will never support punitive measures which will put vulnerable people at risk. And we will never support measures that undermine the capacity of Australians to participate in meaningful work.
Labor will always fight to protect job seekers from this government when they seek to treat unemployed Australians unfairly. That is what we did last year when we opposed and defeated the government's proposal for job seekers who are under 30 and on Newstart going without any payment—that is right, no money and no support at all for six months of each and every year that they were unemployed. We did it again when this government tried, just last month, to get the Senate to agree to leave job seekers with nothing to live on for one month. Labor oppose having job seekers live with no support payments for long periods of time, as we understand the consequences of such actions.

Labor also fought the government's unreasonable attack on job seekers when it tried to force job seekers to apply for 40 jobs per month, despite clear evidence that it would create a massive, unnecessary administrative burden on businesses and despite the fact that, since the last election, the government has failed to develop anything that in any way resembles a comprehensive plan to create jobs and grow the Australian economy.

Labor also stood up for vulnerable job seekers when the government sought to change the definition of what constitutes 'a reasonable excuse' for job seekers who are not meeting their obligations. Labor's record stands for itself when it comes to supporting job seekers to meet their obligation to find work and it stands for itself when it comes to protecting vulnerable Australians from the coalition's ongoing attack on those Australians who find themselves unemployed.

As I have said previously, there are a number of proposals in this bill which Labor will support only because there is clear evidence that they will lead to better employment outcomes for job seekers whilst still ensuring adequate support. Namely, Labor want to be able to support the proposed measures in this bill that more closely align the dates of suspensions and/or penalties with the actual date of noncompliance—that is, job seekers will become aware sooner of their noncompliance and will be in a position to respond to it much faster.

With Labor's support, the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Stronger Penalties for Serious Failures) Bill 2014 legislated the no-show no-pay principle to provide a stronger incentive for job seekers to attend their appointments. Labor only did so on the basis that we were able to protect the right of job seekers to review decisions in which payments were suspended. It is, again, worth noting that this is a right that the coalition government sought to remove. Labor also supported this measure on the basis that we protected the rights of job seekers to justify a reasonable excuse for breaches to their obligations and ensured that no job seeker would have their payments stopped without first being notified.

Labor recognise that a more immediate link for job seekers between a proven noncompliant action and any penalty or suspension applied through an appropriate and fair process is better for the job seeker than a penalty or suspension applied much further down the track. I note that the former assistant minister in his second reading speech advised that these changes have been effective in ensuring job seekers are continuing to engage and get support designed to assist them into work. As a result, the average payment suspension duration has fallen from 5.2 business days in September 2014 to 3.1 in March 2015. This is also a win for the broader community, as it means more Australians are engaging and looking for work, and it is a win for job seekers because it means they are spending less time without the support that they need. These measures also appear to have increased the engagement of job seekers, with the
former assistant minister advising that over 90 per cent of job seekers attending a rescheduled appointment after missing their initial appointment compared to 65 per cent in 2013-14.

It is for these reasons that Labor will seek to support the proposals that will enable a suspension or penalty when a job seeker fails to participate in an activity, including such things as a course of education or training, Work for the Dole, voluntary work or unpaid work experience without a reasonable excuse, and the noncompliance would be immediately notified to the job seeker. This will ensure that the suspension or penalty is most effective and it will encourage job seekers to re-engage more quickly.

Similarly, Labor will support amendments regarding the imposition of more immediate penalties when a job seeker fails to undertake adequate job search efforts. Currently, it can take many weeks after a noncompliance before a penalty is applied. This amendment will allow payment to be delayed immediately when a job seeker fails to undertake adequate job search efforts without a reasonable excuse. This will, again, encourage job seekers to re-engage more quickly and also result in immediate and full back-pay. I have been assured by the former minister and the department that this will not change the amount of the penalties but will only mean that the penalties will be more immediate. Again, with the protection of reasonable excuse and adequate notification, this amendment will support job seekers and the broader community.

Labor also has no issue with the renaming of suspensions and penalties to make it easier for job seekers and job-service providers, for consistency, so long as there are no unintended consequences and no changes to existing penalties or suspensions other than those just mentioned. This is, however, where Labor's support for the coalition's amendment bill ends.

I now turn to one of the smaller but no less significant amendments in this bill relating to what is known as a jobs plan. The government is proposing that a recipient of Newstart or another relevant payment will be financially penalised if they refuse to sign their job plan at their first employment-service-provider appointment. Currently, the system only allows participants to be financially penalised by an employment-service provider for failing to agree to their job plan after the second refusal to sign, by way of a reconnection failure. Such a penalty can be imposed until a job seeker does enter into a job plan. It does not appear unreasonable to allow a job seeker to refuse to immediately sign and agree to a job plan.

The current provisions appear to be adequate and appropriate and the government has provided no overwhelming evidence as to why this amendment should be supported. A job plan clearly sets out the mutual obligations that a job seeker and a service provider must both meet. It would, therefore, appear to promote greater engagement with a job seeker to allow them time to review and consider their obligations, under a job plan, before immediately having to agree to one. This change could conceivably leave job seekers with no payments for one month or unduly influence them to agree to a jobs plan they do not understand or agree to.

If passed, this measure will take away the essential right of job seekers to negotiate a fair and reasonable job plan. The current system provides job seekers with the right to take their job plan home and review it carefully, before being required to sign it. The current system also provides job seekers with protections from employment-service providers who may be seeking to impose obligations that are inappropriate or wrong. Unfortunately, with the
introduction of the coalition's jobactive system, this appears to be becoming an all-too-frequent occurrence.

An employment advocate recently reported that a job seeker aged 55 was directed by their provider to undertake Work for the Dole. In fact, the deed and guidelines—again, as a result of Labor's advocacy—make it clear that job seekers aged 50 to 59 cannot be required to do mandatory Work for the Dole. Similarly, a constituent as the sole carer of two children, one with a disability, meeting her activity requirements by working casual jobs was told by her provider that she would lose her payment if she did not agree to undertake Work for the Dole, despite being exempt from these obligations.

Luckily, in both of these examples, the job seekers had the ability to access further advice and confirm, through government departments, that the advice they were given was wrong. It does, however, raise significant concerns for those job seekers who may not, for whatever reason, be able to access further advice. If job seekers are denied this necessary time to consider a jobs plan—known in the government's Job Plans Guideline as ‘think time’—vulnerable job seekers could be at risk of signing job plans that do not accurately reflect their personal circumstances, resulting in mental distress and leading to non-compliance and further suspension of payments and, perhaps, greater disadvantage.

Similarly, Labor has significant concerns with the government's move to introduce a power to enable the secretary to suspend a job seeker's payment if the secretary determines that a job seeker acts in an inappropriate manner during an appointment, such that the purpose of the appointment is not achieved.

The former assistant minister asserted that job-service providers are reporting that some job seekers are treating service providers with contempt by not behaving appropriately at relevant appointments. However, again, there appears to be no clear evidence of how widespread this behaviour is. For this purpose, the legislation appears to be creating a new term—'inappropriate behaviour'—which currently is not defined and which would be determined in a legislative instrument made by the secretary.

Current departmental guidelines give some indication as to what behaving inappropriately might mean, including failing to behave according to commonly expected standards, not following reasonable instruction or being uncooperative. Given that the previous and not uncommon evidence provided to some job seekers of the new jobactive program is incorrect advice and job seekers being threatened with payment penalties for refusing to undertake activities—despite not being required to—it would seem that there may be occasions where it would be entirely justifiable for a job seeker to be uncooperative. As one stakeholder remarked, 'When you have some within the system already acting well outside of the guidelines to the detriment of job seekers, it may not be helpful to provide them with an even bigger stick.'

The Australian Unemployment Union also presents some evidence in its objection to this measure, in response to the former minister's suggestion that an employee who misbehaves at work and fails to participate would not be paid by their employer. The union points out that in such cases employees who make mistakes, at work, are given warnings before they are sacked or have wages taken away. Under this bill, job seekers are, again, being denied this important right to a warning and conciliation. Despite the government's desire to equate the actions of
job seekers to employees, in this legislation, it appears it did not want to afford job seekers the similar and appropriate rights of the workers it was trying to equate them to.

Finally, I come to Labor's largest concern about this bill. It is the proposal in the amendment bill that seeks to reverse changes Labor made during its term in government, where it improved the former Liberal government's measures to ensure that job seekers who suffered a penalty for failing to accept suitable work were encouraged to re-engage in seeking employment and/or training.

Under the current job seeker compliance provisions contained within the Social Security (Administration) Act 1999, job seekers receiving a participation payment—for example, Newstart, youth allowance or parenting payment—may incur an eight-week non-payment penalty for failing to accept suitable work. This non-payment penalty may be waived if the job seeker agrees to re-engage and complete extra activity requirements. The legislation also currently provides that the non-payment period may also be waived if the job seeker would be in serious financial hardship if this non-payment period was not ended. These waiver provisions are important because they encourage job seekers to re-engage in the process after non-compliance by allowing the non-payment period to be ended if that job seeker re-engages with their participation obligations.

This bill is the coalition's second attempt to try and make changes so that job seekers who incur an eight-week non-payment penalty for refusing suitable work will no longer be able to have their penalty waived at all—at all! Labor opposed this previously and we will be opposing it again. It would mean that job seekers who have had their payment cut for eight weeks would not be able to re-engage at all during the eight-week non-payment period and their mutual obligations would cease during this period. Surely, it must be better to have job seekers doing more intensive job search activities and back actively looking for work rather than not doing anything—but apparently not, according to this government. Labor is also concerned that an eight-week penalty period is severe and could result in financial hardship and perhaps even worse social issues such as homelessness. Labor cannot allow this to occur. We see no overwhelming evidence to suggest a change to our position that would yield positive outcomes for job seekers or society more broadly.

The former assistant minister in his second reading speech indicated that the department in the 2013-14 financial year waived 78 per cent of those receiving eight-week penalties for refusing to accept a suitable job. This means that 78 percent of job seekers are re-engaging in the process of finding sustainable work. Isn't this exactly what we want to them to do? Why would we prefer to have someone have no payment for eight weeks rather than have the job seekers more engaged?

Interestingly, it appears these changes are again driven by ideology. The numbers do not appear to warrant these changes being pursued not once but twice. The former assistant minister notes that in 2013 there were 1,626 penalties applied for refusing or failing to accept reasonable work—that is just 0.2 per cent of the 800,000 job seekers. Clearly it is not a common occurrence, and clearly the numbers do not make sense.

As I said in my opening remarks, Labor have always supported the principle of mutual obligation and we will continue to do so. We want to see every Australian who is capable of work in a decent, safe and sustainable job, and we want the government to provide the support that unemployed Australians need to find work. That is why we want to support the elements
in this bill that show clear evidence of increasing the chances of job seekers to find work, and increase the support that they can access in that process.

Fundamentally, this bill is about the detail of getting job seekers to look for work. The real issue here is that there are not enough jobs in Australia for everyone who can and wants to work. While an extra 95,000 Australians have joined the unemployment queue since the election, the coalition government has failed, in over two years, to deliver a genuine plan for job creation and for growing the economy. To simply talk about it is not enough. The unemployment rate has been at six per cent or above for 15 months now, and the last time this happened was over 12 years ago. The number of unemployed Australians remains at near 20-year highs. This time two years ago when the government was elected, unemployment was 5.6 per cent—today it is 6.2 per cent.

This trend is in stark contrast to the major advanced economies where unemployment rates are on the way down. This government is currently not even meeting its own very modest target to create one million jobs in five years. And of most concern, perhaps, is the significantly higher level of youth unemployment in this country. The fact remains that under the Abbott government unemployment is up and economic growth is down. Figures show that there are nearly five unemployed Australians for every vacant job. We have heard a lot in the last couple of weeks from the new Prime Minister about jobs and growth. Unless there is a real plan to actually create jobs and grow the economy, this new Prime Minister will be no different to the last one.

In conclusion, Labor will be moving amendments to remove parts of this bill that we do not support. And given the number of minor amendments in this bill, Labor has also referred the bill to the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee for hearings to ensure there are no further unintended consequences of this bill. I understand that the committee is due to report on 24 November 2015. I provided the government with a copy of Labor’s amendments three weeks ago. I sincerely hope that the government has taken the time to consider its position when I move these amendments during consideration in detail. I want to be very clear here: Labor will not support this bill if our amendments are not agreed to by the government, as we believe the risk to potentially vulnerable job seekers is just too great.

Mrs McNAMARA (Dobell) (20:50): I rise today in support of the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Further Strengthening Job Seeker Compliance) Bill 2015. This bill builds upon the successful reforms under the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Strengthening the Job Seeker Compliance Framework) Act 2014. The 2014 act has at its centre a no-show no-pay principle encouraging job seekers to attend their appointments with job service providers. The reforms proposed in last year's bill have proven effective. In 2013-14 only 65 per cent of job seekers who missed their first appointment attended their second rescheduled appointment. In stark contrast, in June 2015 over 90 per cent of job seekers attended a second rescheduled appointment.

The success of last year's reforms have seen more job seekers placed in paid employment. Importantly, last year's reforms have also reduced red tape and compliance requirements for employment service providers. The reduction of red tape for employment service providers has been attained through the fact that with more job seekers now attending appointments in the first instance, there is a reduction in these service providers requiring follow-up action regarding non-attendance.
This bill also seeks to amend the Social Security (Administration) Act 1999 to support measures introduced in the 2015-16 budget to strengthen the job seeker compliance framework. This is achieved by providing stronger consequences for job seekers who fail to meet their mutual obligation requirements. Such consequences are also made more immediate under this bill. This bill also simplifies the methods of compliance to ensure that job seekers better understand their mutual obligation requirements.

The provisions outlined in this bill will take effect from 1 July 2016 and contain a number of key factors. One of the significant amendments within this bill is the requirement for an employment pathway plan. The policy around the development of an employment pathway plan is one of common sense. To best position a job seeker for employment, their individual circumstances must be taken into account. Should a job seeker fail to enter into an employment pathway plan, the participation payment may not be made until the job seeker complies with a further opportunity to enter into a plan. If the job seeker does not have a reasonable excuse for not entering into an employment pathway plan, a penalty amount may be deducted from their payment. An employee does not receive payment for not working, so why should someone supported by the taxpayer be paid for doing nothing in return? The same standards of behaviour expected of employees in the workplace should be expected of job seekers in receipt of taxpayer funded income support. Of note is that currently there is no financial penalty imposed for refusal to enter into an employment pathway plan, despite it being a compulsory component to receive participation payments. It is the immediacy of the penalty which is a significant improvement in this bill.

The engagement of job seekers within the job market is another improvement in this bill. When a job seeker fails to engage in job-seeking activities such as training, or programs such as Work for the Dole, the penalty amount would be deducted from the instalment period in which the failure occurs. Job seekers who fail to actively engage in job-seeking activities will receive a penalty in proportion to the action on which they have failed. Put simply, job seekers who fail to participate in job-seeking activities will be penalised in the same instalment period in which they failed. Additionally, when a job seeker fails to undertake an appropriate search for work, their payment may not be payable until an adequate search is resumed. Once there is a demonstrated effort to find employment, job seekers will then receive full back-payment of the penalised amount. Under the current system, job seekers may receive full income support for up to 14 weeks, even if they are failing to conduct an adequate search for employment. This is unacceptable. Income support is designed as a support—it is a hand up when looking for employment, not a handout for nothing in return. Let us not forget that, with eight out of 10 taxpayers currently footing the welfare bill, those receiving payments owe it to Australian taxpayers to meet their employment-seeking obligations. These changes will ensure that there is no opportunity for some individuals to take advantage and be seen to bludge whilst receiving the taxpayer's dollar. Getting people into paid employment is and will always be this government's ultimate goal.

Also included in this bill is provision to ensure ongoing, proactive and enthusiastic job search efforts. Taxpayers' and the community's expectations are that offers of suitable employment should signal the end of income support. However, some job seekers are continually declining these offers. When a job seeker refuses or fails to accept an offer of suitable employment without a reasonable excuse for failure, the eight-week penalty period
for failure will no longer be waived by simply demonstrating a re-engagement in job seeking. In 2013-14, around 78 per cent of eight-week non-payment period penalties for failing to engage in job-seeking activities were waived. This bill ensures that this period is not waived and that a strong deterrent is in place for those job seekers who elect to not work.

Unfortunately, in many circumstances and instances, jobs being refused by job seekers are ones that they are capable of doing. The jobs offered are not beyond a person’s skill set and do not present a health or safety risk. More often, they are specifically targeted and offered in consideration of personal circumstances. Perhaps more alarming than job seekers refusing positions that they have the capacity and capability to fill are the reasons these job seekers provide for refusal. It is not good enough to refuse job offers and provide excuses such as that it would interfere with holiday plans, that the work is beneath them or that too much effort is required; it is totally unacceptable.

In a similar vein to job seekers being penalised for not showing up to appointments, those that show up but behave inappropriately will also be penalised and made accountable for their conduct. If an employee conducted themselves in an inappropriate manner, they would be suitably penalised by their employer. Therefore, why should those on income support expect payment for conducting themselves inappropriately whilst seeking employment?

As of March this year there were 5,359 people in my electorate of Dobell who were registered as unemployed. I acknowledge that amongst the 5,359 there are any number of families struggling to pay bills, to put food on the table or to provide financially for their children. The majority of job seekers do the right thing and they are genuinely seeking employment—they want to work. On a positive note, as of June this year Dobell has seen a reduction in registered unemployed persons to 4,687. I am not going to say that the government’s reforms of last year to strengthen job seeker compliance are the sole reason for this decrease. However, I am going to proudly emphasise that this government is evidently getting more unemployed people re-engaged in the workforce. The change in attitude towards addressing unemployment between the previous Labor government and this government has now seen taxpayer funds no longer available as a permanent income stream. Rather, welfare payments are a support system to assist more job seekers into paid employment.

While there need to be penalties in place to address those who reject suitable employment, there is, of course, leniency in cases of hardship or difficult circumstances. This government acknowledges that sometimes circumstances change. I am sure that many in our community have faced personal difficulties at one point or another, which is exactly why the penalty for failure to accept a suitable job offer is waived if the job seeker is not able to undertake additional activities or if the penalty imposed would cause financial hardship. This provision takes into account those in our community undertaking caring duties and the many other situations which require support due to lack of paid employment.

The Social Security Legislation Amendment (Further Strengthening Job Seeker Compliance) Bill 2015 also simplifies the existing compliance framework and assists job seekers in understanding what is required of them when receiving income support.

Debate interrupted.
Mr MITCHELL (McEwen—Second Deputy Speaker) (21:00): I rise to speak of two issues that are important to a number of communities in the electorate of McEwen. The first issue—of course it is the Carlton draft, but we all share that pain! The first issue is the Liberals' broken promise for Solar Towns Program funding for Sunbury and the Macedon Ranges. The second issue is the election promise that Labor kept with the recent installation of traffic lights at a notorious intersection in Craigieburn.

In the 2013 federal election, the Liberals made an election promise to the communities in the Sunbury and Macedon Ranges area for solar funding as part of the Solar Towns Program. For the Sunbury and Macedon Ranges communities, the money would be used to cut electricity costs at community sports stadiums. The commitment was supported and tweeted by the then shadow minister for climate action, environment and heritage, the member for Flinders, and there is his tweet of his picture with the Liberal candidate, welcoming this promise. But in October 2013, the mayor of the Hume City Council wrote to the newly elected minister congratulating him on his role and, in the same letter, the mayor sought to progress the funding for this election commitment. The response from the Department of the Environment was to essentially say, 'Watch this space,' as details of the policy and program would roll out in June 2014.

Well, the solar program did roll out in June 2014, as indicated by the department, but with reduced funding. The minister's promise of $50 million for the Solar Towns Program was revised down to $2.1 million by the Liberal government, which, no doubt, has impacted on the ability of the program to roll out as anticipated.

The 2014-15 funding was allocated to successful programs in the Surf Coast Shire of Victoria. The 2015-16 funding round recently closed with nominations only open for community organisations operating within the cities of Playford or Salisbury in South Australia. There was no mention of the funding as promised to the Sunbury and the Macedon Ranges communities—not a squeak! On its website, the department set out the government commitment to install renewable energy systems in preselected community sites and regions. But just exactly where are these preselected community sites? And where are the regions? How does a site or region get preselected? Does this include the sites of Sunbury and the Macedon Ranges which were promised funding?

These communities were made an election promise in 2013 and have not heard a squeak from the responsible minister about the promise being fulfilled. In fact, the most recent advice from the department provides no certainty to the local council in this regard. The Hume City Council has been told that the next round of funding will be open before the end of 2015 and 'may include' Sunbury and the Macedon Ranges. It may include those areas. No certainty or assurance has been provided.
What is needed is greater transparency in the funding allocation process. The type of information that should be available and would assist local councils, including the City of Hume, would be to see a list of the preselected sites and regions being made available to the public as well as the department's timeline for allocating funding to these preselected areas.

Let us look at where we currently stand. We had a 2013 election commitment. Two years down the road—two prime ministers—and we have no timeline or assurance that this commitment will actually be fulfilled. If we continue down this road and do not apply any kind of circuit-breaker or change to the current process, we all know where it is going to lead: it will lead to yet another broken promise by the Liberals in the electorate of McEwen.

Whilst on the topic of election promises, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Hume City Council and the Craigieburn Residents' Association on helping me to deliver on a commitment that I made at the 2013 election. I promised that, if re-elected, I would fight for and deliver much-needed traffic lights at the corner of Hanson Road and Craigieburn Road. This has been an ongoing issue for residents for as long I can remember—even back when I bought my first house, in Craigieburn, in 1991. By working together we secured the necessary funding and just last week saw completed the construction of the new traffic lights at one of the busiest and most notorious intersections in Craigieburn.

The importance of this project to the local community cannot be understated. The community had been campaigning for these traffic lights to be installed to improve pedestrian and traffic safety in the area around Craigieburn Plaza shops. The new traffic lights will save lives, as the number of accidents at this intersection over the years has been terrible. It will also improve the commute to school and to work for many people by making the traffic-flow smoother.

I was proud to be at the launch of the new traffic lights last week, with the council and with the residents' association, as we celebrated the delivery of a Labor election commitment within the community.

Queensland: Electricity Prices

Mr Pitt (Hinkler) (21:05): Last week, the state member for Burnett, Stephen Bennett, and I called on the Queensland Labor government to follow Indonesia's lead—Indonesia, would you believe!—and cut power prices for farmers and businesses. As a former electrical engineer and farmer, electricity pricing is an issue I am particularly passionate about.

The median personal income in my electorate of Hinkler is just $411 a week—just $411. A substantial number of pensioners call Hinkler home, and we have one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. Unfortunately, many of Hinkler's major employers are making workforce decisions based on the cost of energy. Local foundries, farmers and manufacturers all say their overheads are rising at an unsustainable rate. It is no coincidence that in 2013-14 the number of households in regional Queensland disconnected for debt or non-payment rose 87 per cent to 12,454. Ergon and Energex recently released their yearly profits, showing a $3.5 billion dividend going straight to the state Labor government—$3½ billion! I just want to emphasise that point: while 12,500 Queenslanders were disconnected because they could not afford to pay their bills, the state government is making billions.

At the 2015-16 state budget, we saw the Queensland Labor government transferring debt to the government owned corporations rather than prudently managing their own budgets. The
lack of market competition in regional Queensland will only worsen if the Queensland Labor
government proceeds with its plan to merge the state owned corporations Ergon, Energex and
Powerlink. The merger, combined with already high electricity prices, falling energy
consumption and the renewable energy target will result in substantial job losses in the energy
sector.

We have heard a lot from the Electrical Trades Union during the January 2015 state
election, in Queensland, but where are they now? They are certainly not out there actively
fighting for their members' jobs. Where is the ETU?

The Australian Energy Regulator has moved to restrict Ergon Energy's proposed revenue
by 27 per cent over the next five years to try to save consumers some money, but, instead of
reducing energy prices across the board, the state Labor government is challenging the AER's
determination and is using Queenslanders as their personal cash cows. I acknowledge that
some of the profits go towards ensuring those in the bush pay the same price as those in the
city through a uniform tariff policy, but that is not the main issue here. The fact is that Labor
has indicated it will use $3½ billion to pay down its own debt. So Queenslanders are paying
for their financial incompetence. I would be willing to bet that the next Labor state budget
will not show any reduction in debt, because they will do what not only state Labor
governments but federal Labor governments do best: spend, spend, spend.

A 93 per cent increase in electricity prices for irrigators in six years, as reported by the
Bundaberg News-Mail, is completely unacceptable. If things continue the way they are,
before too long Australians will be buying all their food from overseas. The Australian
newspaper reported last week that the Indonesian government will cut energy prices for
companies by reducing their own revenue, to stimulate the economy and create jobs. There is
absolutely no reason the Queensland state Labor government cannot do the same thing.
Hinkler residents concerned about electricity prices or any other state issues should go along
to Labor's community cabinet meeting in Bundaberg on 18 and 19 October and make their
views known. Farmers, businesses and households in my electorate are hurting and they need
cost-of-living relief now.

The issue for the electricity industry is difficult. The situation is like this: it is very similar
to someone saying to you, as a family, as an owner of a car, that you need to buy a new car to
fix the emissions from your old car. At the same time, you need to keep your old car, you
need to maintain it, you need to pay for fuel, you need to pay insurance, you need to pay
registration, you need to put tyres on it and you need to keep it ready and operational, because
your new car, which has great emissions technology fitted, simply does not work all the time.
It only works when the wind blows or the sun shines. That is the challenge for the electricity
industry. You cannot have a factory which produces widgets at a particular rate and then hope
to keep that on the sidelines and only turn it on when you think you require it, at peak periods.
It will cost more money. It is very straightforward. It is economics 101. If we do not address
this, there will be substantial job losses—further job losses—in Queensland. We already have
a disastrous situation with what has happened in the mining industry. We cannot afford to lose
our agriculture producers and, in particular, the sugar industry, which employs tens of
thousands of Queenslanders across the Queensland coast. We must fix electricity pricing, we
must fix it now, and we need to act.
Iraq and Syria

Mr DANBY (Melbourne Ports) (21:10): Russia has invaded Syria. It has installed total air defence over that country with sophisticated SAM 22s covering Syria's airspace. Yet Daesh, IS—the alleged aim of this invasion—does not even have a crop duster. This makes even more farcical our foreign minister's initial enthusiasm for Russia's involvement. I have a quote from her which I can barely believe. She said:

Russia's involvement [in negotiations with Iran over their nuclear program] has been ... very positive by all of those negotiating that agreement.

If we use that as an example of Russia's preparedness to be part of a solution rather than part of the problem, then we can have some optimism that Russia's involvement—
in Syria—
is positive.

As you would expect, I do not share that optimism about Russia's involvement in Syria.

The foreign minister's announcement of support for the dictator Assad, who has murdered 200,000 of his own people, as the only alternative to Daesh taking over Syria, is both untrue and unethical. The massive Russian intervention on the side of Iran and Hezbollah cements in place Iran's Shiite crescent from Lebanon, through Syria and Iraq, to Iran. Worse, the Iranian controlled Iraqi government, where Australia has 750 of its finest soldiers trying to retrain the Iraqi army, has announced its gratitude by openly joining a pact with Iran, Syria and Lebanon under Russia's auspices. The Iraqi Prime Minister insists that the intelligence-sharing arrangement will operate from Baghdad and will only be aimed at Daesh. What gratitude for the billions spent by the United States and its allies, including the current presence of Australian soldiers.

That is why I will move a resolution next week in parliament for Australian soldiers to be withdrawn from the Hajji military camp, where we are at least implicitly co-operating with the Iranians. Everyone in the Middle East, apart from our foreign minister, seems to know that the Assad war in Syria is being run by Iran's Viceroy, General Soleimani, now in conjunction with the Russians.

There are 25,000 unarmed and untrained Kurdish fighters just north of Raqqa, the centre of all evil, and they could be there in two weeks if they were trained and armed properly. From a direct Australian national security point of view, this would be much more useful than going on with dilettante air attacks on this evil horde present in Raqqa. It would prevent attacks like the ones in Parramatta or Dandenong by deranged Jihadist teenagers who are getting their orders from Raqqa, from Daesh, from the rapists and murderers like al-Cambodi, Neil Prakash. I am not advocating that our 750 soldiers charge in to the valley of death in Raqqa but that we do something with the people, the Kurds, who hate and want to destroy our mutual enemy, the evil of Daesh.

I come back to the strategic shift, the Russian invasion of Syria and what it portends. It portends another victory for Iran after duping and cajoling the United States into a nuclear deal which will, in the medium term, refinance, rearm and renew Iran's bid for the atom bomb. Only today, Iran, emboldened by that appeasement agreement—made not in Munich but in Vienna—tested new long-range ballistic missiles against all notions of the United Nations and all agreements, including the Vienna agreement. Our foreign minister should be
reminded that, in Australia, the Iranian mercenaries, Hezbollah, are classified by this parliament as a terrorist organisation. Our foreign minister thinks that the nuclear treaty with Iran is good, that Assad should be kept in office and that Russia is fighting Daesh. I beg to differ. The invasion of Syria by Russia was contemplated because the Assad regime was on the ropes. They had even run out of Hezbollah fighters, thousands of them having been killed. Now, with close Russian air support, Russian volunteer troops, plus Iranians troops, they have been attacking day after day the Daesh rebels in the north of Syria. We can fight Daesh in eastern Syria and continue to have nothing to do with the Assad-Russian-Hezbollah 'ghastly gang', as the great Churchill described people similar to Putin and those of Hezbollah and Iran.

Life Sciences Queensland: Globally Engaging Network Event

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (21:15): Life Sciences Queensland is an organisation that works to ensure their members and indeed the broader sciences industry work together to complement each other's capabilities and demonstrate the importance and relevance of the life sciences industry. Their unquestioned success is due in large part to the energetic Mario Pennisi and his hardworking team.

Last night, Life Sciences hosted their annual Globally Engaging Network Event, or GENE, to acknowledge individuals in Queensland who are contributing to the life sciences sector in a variety of ways. I was very honoured to receive the LSQ Elected Officials Award for my role in advocacy and promotion of the life sciences industry, which, can I say, is something that I genuinely enjoy doing.

Queensland has an undisputed reputation for their quality research and outstanding scientists. I am very lucky to have the University of Queensland in my electorate, as it gives me the opportunity to see some amazing innovations and discoveries. I have spoken many times in this place about the remarkable individuals and teams who are developing cutting edge solutions within the science and research fields. People like Ian Frazer, Mark Kendall, Jurgen Gotz and Maree Smith. It is a privilege to promote the work they do. And I am grateful that my good friends at the University of Queensland Senior Vice-President Max Lu and Vice-Chancellor Peter Hoj keep me updated so I can highlight the achievements and developing research, like that of Dr Kate Schroder and Professor David Fairlie.

Tonight I want to acknowledge the award winners from last night, who deserve our accolades and tributes for the extraordinary work they undertake. I recently spoke in this place about Professor Maree Smith, who, after 11 years of research, has received deserved success with her drug for people with neuropathic pain. So I am particularly delighted to be able to inform the House that last night Maree was recognised for her remarkable achievements by becoming the inaugural inductee in the Life Sciences Queensland Hall of Fame. Maree's tireless devotion to her work means hundreds of patients will no longer have to suffer through chronic pain. This is the first time this honour has been awarded, which demonstrates Professor Smith's outstanding hard work and contribution.

The McCullough Robertson LSQ Industry Excellence Award is given to an individual who has made significant contributions to the performance and success of the Queensland life sciences industry. Last night it was awarded to Dr Dimity Dornan AO, founder of Hear and Say. Dr Dornan does not need an introduction. For more than 20 years she has shown determination and vision to use technology to better the lives of hundreds of deaf children.
The Commemorative Award was created and named in memory of Rose-Anne Kelso, a physiotherapist and president on the boards of Diabetes Australia Queensland and the Australian Physiotherapy Association Queensland, to recognise an individual female's endeavours, passion and dedication to the health and life sciences industries. This year's recipient was oral health therapist and University of Queensland lecturer Ms Leah Hobbs. Ms Hobbs is committed to improving oral health outcomes in Queensland and vulnerable communities throughout the world, including Vanuatu. She has been involved with the Queensland Centre for Intellectual Impairment and Disability for the past five years and has developed online media for QCIDD patients.

Mr David Camerlengo was this year's recipient of the Trade Commissioners Award. Mr Camerlengo was awarded this honour for his efforts to keep Queensland life sciences capabilities at the forefront of consciousness of the North Americans with whom he deals in his role as Trade and Investment Officer.

Regenerative medicine is an incredibly vital area of medicine as it will one day enable us to heal ourselves. The Life Sciences Aon Risk Solutions Regenerative Medicine Award was presented to University of Queensland's Professor Justin Cooper-White, who leads a research group with a focus on tissue engineering and micro fluids that has developed a technology that will accelerate research in stem cell development and regenerative medicine. I am told there were many deserving nominees for this award and it was a most challenging decision to select just one winner.

It truly is a privilege for me to be able to promote the remarkable work of Queensland scientists, and once again I want to acknowledge the other award winners, those who make a genuine life-changing contribution to our society. Thank you once again to Life Sciences Queensland. I intend to keep promoting these success stories and Australia's leading role.

Mental Health

Mr CONROY (Charlton) (21:20): October is Mental Health Month, last week was Mental Health Week, and Saturday, 10 October, was World Mental Health Day. Sadly, in just one week approximately 49 people will have committed suicide and approximately 1,490 will have attempted suicide. In 2013, suicide was the leading cause of death of children between five and 17 years of age—a tragic statistic. These are startling statistics to contemplate.

At a dinner I recently attended for Hunterlink Recovery Services I was confronted with further statistics. Hunterlink Recovery Services is a unique employment assistance program that provides support and counselling 24 hours a day, seven days a week. At the dinner I listened to speakers candidly discussing their mental health journey. One journey was that of a man from the Hunter Region, my region—a family man, a hard working man who worked in the coal mines. This man needed help, not with his physical health but with his mental health. Thankfully, this man was not another statistic. He was strong enough to seek the services of Hunterlink and was able to be assisted.

Hunterlink was formed by Paul Karras, who, with the Maritime Union of Australia, noticed a need for support, recovery and welfare in the maritime and related industries. With the support of the unions, some very progressive employers, and the community, in five short years Hunterlink has grown from a small mental health service provider in Newcastle to a national service with a 24-hour hotline and an employment assistance program. The service
endeavours to provide individualised support to maritime workers, maritime stakeholders, related industries and the local community. They do not turn anyone away and they are particularly proud of that fact.

Hunterlink also reaches out to international seafarers visiting Australian waters. This was recently highlighted when the coal vessel Sage Sagittarius docked in Newcastle. Hunterlink was able to provide counselling to the crew, who had lost three seafarers under very unusual circumstances. Gavin Kelso, Hunterlink's CEO, is dedicated to reaching beyond Australian waters and looking to the future, hoping to help at-risk seafarers struggling with a mental illness, regardless of where the ship is sailing.

In the past two years, mental health reform has been waning. The need for mental health support is increasing, yet we see not enough attention paid to it. Labor believes that long-term mental health reform focused on delivering a more integrated and whole-of-government approach must be a national priority that requires strong leadership. When Labor were in government, we recognised that mental health reform was needed. It was, and continues to be, a priority for us. It was Labor who had the first and only mental health minister, my colleague the member for Port Adelaide, who brought mental health to the cabinet table.

Nearly one in five Australian adults will experience mental illness each year and nearly half of our adult population will experience a mental illness at some point during their lives. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the rate of mental illness is three times the rate of other Australians. The LGBTIQ community live with higher rates of mental illness, self-harm and suicide as well. Sadly, the rate of suicide in rural and remote Australia is 66 per cent higher than in cities.

Last Friday, Labor announced its plan for better support for people with mental illness. This plan supports the National Mental Health Commission's recommendations. In its report, the commission made 25 recommendations and Labor has committed to the recommended target to reduce suicides by 50 per cent over the next 10 years. We will do this through a comprehensive tiered approach that sets incremental targets to reach a final target of reducing suicides and suicide attempts. If elected, Labor will ensure that those living with mental illness and their carers who do not receive a package of support through the National Disability Insurance Scheme still receive the support and care they need. I pay tribute to the work of Senator Jan McLucas in this policy area, and can I say how excited I am that my friend Senator Katy Gallagher was appointed to the shadow cabinet in the role of shadow minister for mental health. I am sure she will do a great job building on Senator McLucas's legacy.

The annual cost of mental illness in Australia has been estimated to be between $20 billion and $60 billion a year, including lost productivity and labour force participation. We can reverse this by giving people the support they need, when they need it. Thankfully, organisations such as Hunterlink Recovery Services are there to give support where needed. However, more needs to be done. Mental health needs to be a priority for the federal government—it was when Labor was in government and it will be when Labor is, hopefully, re-elected.

I pay tribute to the work of Hunterlink, other organisations, trade unions such as the MUA and employer groups who support these very important programs. They are literally saving
people's lives every day. I conclude with a comment that ex-NRL player Dan Hunt made on the night: 'It is not weak to speak.'

Northern Australia

Ms PRICE (Durack) (21:25): I am very pleased to rise today to talk about my recent travels to the Pilbara and Kimberley, in my electorate of Durack, late last week. Western Australia's north-west is indeed one of the most unique, diverse and picturesque regions in Australia. As stated in the northern Australia white paper, Our north, our future, the Pilbara and the Kimberley have enormous potential, and the Turnbull government is committed to developing not just those two regions but the whole of northern Australia, which is why we have now seen the appointment of a minister for the region, Josh Frydenberg. The reason for this? The north is important. We know that the earnings from the Pilbara alone are larger than 119 countries' economies yet are generated by only 60,000 people—a remarkable achievement.

Last Wednesday, I was pleased to be able to chair the 'Aboriginal engagement in the Pilbara' session of the Committee for Economic Development of Australia's Future of the Pilbara forum. I discussed the work I am doing on the Indigenous affairs standing committee, such as our recent inquiry into the effects of alcohol in Indigenous communities and our upcoming inquiry into educational outcomes for Indigenous students. We have heard it before: the Pilbara became the epicentre of Australia's recent mining boom. Mining jobs in the region more than doubled, from 8,512 in 2006 to 18,500 in 2011, and the region's gross regional product grew from $7 billion in 2008-09 to nearly $35 billion this year. The forum discussed and dissected both the challenges and the opportunities the region faces in the future. It was an excellent event—congratulations to CEDA. It was attended by a diverse range of people with one key goal: to see the Pilbara thrive and develop into the economically diverse powerhouse we know it can grow into.

On Thursday, I had the honour of representing the Minister for Indigenous Affairs to launch the Aboriginal Family Law Service WA's Sparkle and Grow program in Kununurra—I love saying that: Sparkle and Grow. It has a great ring to it. The Aboriginal Family Law Service provides a professional legal service while aiming to be a leader in the provision of family violence legal services, support and education for Aboriginal people who have experienced or are experiencing family or sexual violence. Sparkle and Grow is an inspirational program aiming to build confidence and self-worth for teenage girls—but I note it can be adapted to teenage boys—with a focus on human rights and family law. The organisation started the program last year and it is run for five two-hour sessions for over five months, targeting 12- to 16-year-olds but adaptable to a range of ages.

On Friday, I attended and spoke at the Kimberley Economic Forum, held in Broome. Hosted by the Broome Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the forum was an opportunity for business and community leaders from throughout the region to discuss the opportunities the Kimberley faces in the future. Many senior members of the community spoke at the event, such as Mayor Graeme Campbell, who is also the chair of Regional Development Australia in the Kimberley; James Brown, Chair of the Broome Tourism Leadership Group; Glen Chidlow, CEO of Australia's North West Tourism Board; and Wayne Barker, festival and cultural events coordinator of the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre. I had the opportunity to speak about the work the Turnbull government is doing for the Kimberley, as
set out in the northern Australia white paper, such as the commissioning of a water resource
assessment in the west Kimberley to identify water and soils for further development. This is
necessary to entice investors. We have committed $5 million to conduct an examination of the
economic feasibility of the development of stage 3 of the Ord River in Kununurra. We are
also spending $100 million to improve the cattle supply chains through a northern Australian
beef roads fund. And we must not forget the $5 billion concessional loan scheme for
important infrastructure.

This government is fair dinkum about developing the north, and I am proud to play my role
on the implementation committee to ensure that the northern Australia white paper does not
sit on a shelf gathering dust in the future.

The SPEAKER: It being 9.30 pm, the debate is interrupted.

House adjourned at 21:30

NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Mr Dutton: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Migration Act 1958, and for related
purposes.

Ms Plibersek: to move:
That this House calls on the Minister for Foreign Affairs to support a parliamentary debate during
the current sitting on the Australian Government’s strategy in response to the crisis in Syria and Iraq.

Mr Christensen: to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Fair Work Act 2009, and for
related purposes.

Ms McGowan: to move:
That this House:
(1) notes that:
(a) inconsistencies exist between federal and state court procedures in relation to the direct cross
examination of a victim by an accused person;
(b) specific state laws are in place to prevent an accused person from directly cross examining their
victim in sexual offence cases and, in some states, family violence protection order cases—in such
cases, an accused person must have legal representation to cross examine the victim;
(c) in family law cases nationally, there are no legislative protections to prevent an alleged
perpetrator of violence who is unrepresented, from directly cross examining their victim;
(d) intimate partner violence is the top risk factor for death, disability and illness in women aged 15
to 44—the added fear and trauma of cross examination by an alleged or known perpetrator of violence
is a continuation of violence; and
(2) calls on the Government to amend family law legislation to ensure that in situations of family
violence, an unrepresented litigant alleged or known to have perpetrated violence is unable to directly
cross-examine the victim.

Mr Danby: to move:
That this House calls on the:
(1) Minister for Foreign Affairs to debate in Parliament the Australian Government’s changing policy in
relation to Iran and Syria, including:
(a) the nature and rationale of any proposed intelligence sharing agreement with Iran, and the rationale and likely consequences of entering into such an agreement given Iran’s financial, military and intelligence support of regional militias, including some proscribed by the Australian Parliament, such as Hezbollah;

(b) the change in Government policy, from calling for the removal of Syrian President Bashar Hafez al-Assad as a necessary step for a stable political transition agreed to by all opposition groups, to one aligned with the Russian, Iranian and Hezbollah position that President Assad is seen as part of the political solution to that country’s civil war;

(c) the Minister for Foreign Affair’s statements on Syria that ‘Russia’s involvement is positive’, in light of Russian airstrikes and Russian, Iranian and Hezbollah military attacks against moderate western backed and non Daesh (IS) rebels in Syria; and

(d) concerns that the Minister for Foreign Affair’s backing of Iranian and Russian involvement in Syria, and particularly, the Government’s false claim that ‘the West’ must choose between President Assad and Daesh, are making British and American diplomatic efforts towards viable political transition more difficult;

(2) Government to:

(a) withdraw Australian Army trainers from the Taji military complex if, as a result of Iraqi–Iranian military cooperation, Iraq’s apparent participation in a pact with Russia, Syria and Iran, and the Australian Army trainers and Special Forces being redeployed to arm and train non PKK Kurds in northern Iraq, aid our fight against Daesh; and

(b) call on Russia to negotiate with Turkey, Europe and the United States on a no fly zone and humanitarian corridor in northern Syria, and, along with Iran and Hezbollah, cease its attacks on non Daesh rebels;

(3) Minister for Foreign Affairs to debate in Parliament any move to amend Australia’s autonomous sanctions in relation to Iran before such a decision is taken; and

(4) Government to defer any permission for Iran to establish an increased diplomatic presence in Australia until there is evidence that Iran ceases to support proscribed terrorist organisations, especially given the history of terrorism supporting activities by Iranian diplomats around the world.

Mrs Prentice: to move:

That this House:

(1) recognises that Australia’s state and territory capitals and other major cities are home to more than two in every three Australians;

(2) notes that the population of most Australian cities is projected to increase in the coming decades, creating additional challenges in managing planning, congestion and urban amenity;

(3) recognises that the Parliamentary Friendship Group for Better Cities was established in 2014 with the aim of working together to make Australia’s capital and major cities more liveable, resilient and productive;

(4) congratulates the Prime Minister and the Government for recognising cities policies as a priority of government through the appointment of a Minister for Cities and the Built Environment; and

(5) encourages all Members to continue to give strong support to the wellbeing of Australian cities.

Mrs Prentice: to move:

That this House:

(1) recognises that Wednesday 11 November marks Remembrance Day, the 97th anniversary of the Armistice which ended World War I;
(2) commemorates the sacrifice of the more than 60,000 Australians who were killed in World War I, and the 156,000 wounded, gassed or taken prisoner;
(3) recognises the contribution of the more than 1000 Indigenous Australians who fought in World War I;
(4) notes that by the number of deaths and casualties, World War I remains the most costly conflict in Australian history; and
(5) calls on all Australians to observe one minute’s silence at 11 am, in memory of those who have died or suffered in wars and conflict.

Mrs Prentice: to move:

That this House:
(1) recognises that BUSHkids is a non government, not for profit community organisation which offers a range of free allied health services to children and families living in rural Queensland;
(2) notes that in 2015, BUSHkids celebrates its 80th year of service to the people of rural Queensland;
(3) acknowledges that BUSHkids relies on generous donations from the general public in order to be able to continue its valuable work;
(4) notes the launch of Friends of BUSHkids, an initiative to reinvigorate community involvement in promoting and fundraising for BUSHkids services; and
(5) encourages all Queensland Members to support the Friends of BUSHkids initiative in their electorate.

Mrs Prentice: to move:

That this House:
(1) acknowledges that Australia is a prosperous nation with a high standard of living and low levels of poverty by international standards;
(2) recognises that despite our national prosperity, poverty remains an issue for some Australians;
(3) notes that 11 to 17 October is Anti-Poverty Week, a week where all Australians are encouraged to organise or take part in activities to highlight and overcome poverty in Australia and overseas;
(4) understands that the main aims of Anti-Poverty Week are to:
   (a) strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship; and
   (b) encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems, including action by individuals, communities, organisations and governments; and
(5) commends the organisers and sponsors of Anti-Poverty Week for their ongoing efforts to raise awareness and take action to address poverty.

Mrs Prentice: to move:

That this House:
(1) acknowledges that many young Australians are environmentally conscious and interested in protecting our precious natural environment;
(2) recognises that the Government’s Green Army programme is providing practical opportunities for young Australians to participate in local environmental projects;
(3) acknowledges that participants gain practical skills and training that can assist them to prepare for the workforce and improve career opportunities;
(4) notes that four Green Army projects have commenced in the electoral division of Ryan, and hundreds more have commenced across Australia; and

CHAMBER
(5) commends the Government for committing more than $700 million over four years to the Green Army programme.

Mrs Prentice: to move:
That this House:
(1) notes that Vietnam Veterans Day:
   (a) is held on 18 August every year;
   (b) commemorates the service and sacrifice of the almost 60,000 Australians who served in the Vietnam War, including the 521 who were killed, and the 3,000 wounded; and
   (c) was, until 1987, known as Long Tan Day, which commemorated the service of the 108 personnel of D Company 6RAR, who on 18 August 1966, with limited supplies and in torrential rain, successfully fought off 2,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops near the village of Long Tan;
(2) reiterates its sincere appreciation for the service of all veterans of the Vietnam War; and
(3) expresses its regret that many veterans of the Vietnam War did not receive appropriate recognition of their service upon their return to Australia.

Mrs Prentice: to move:
That this House:
(1) recognises that Meals on Wheels has a long and proud history of providing ready-made nutritious meals, as well as a friendly smile and a chat, through its dedicated network of volunteers since 1952;
(2) acknowledges that Meals on Wheels prides itself on providing ‘More than just a meal’; and
(3) affirms that the ability of Meals on Wheels to provide meals along with trusted local community outreach is unparalleled, and is worthy of the recognition and continuing support of government.
Wildlife Conservation: Swift Parrot

Question No. 829

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for the Environment, in writing, on 25 June 2015:

1. What is the most recent available estimate of the number of remaining wild Swift Parrots in Australia.
2. Has the number of Swift Parrots increased, decreased, or remained the same since the introduction of the 2011 National Recovery Plan for the Swift Parrot.
3. Did the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment seek specialist expert advice regarding five proposed logging coupes within an identified 'Swift Parrot Important Breeding Area' in Tasmania's southern forests; if so, did that advice warn that logging in the coupes would result in the loss of critical breeding habitat and interfere with the recovery of the species.
4. Why did the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment approve logging in three of the five coupes for which the advice above was provided.
5. Has he taken into consideration, research by Australian National University scientists which indicates that on the Tasmanian mainland, most Swift Parrot nests are currently failing to successfully produce young birds due to predation of the young by the Sugar Glider, which has been introduced to Tasmania.
6. Has he taken into consideration that Forestry Tasmania has served a notice of intent to clear fell the property it calls Coupe SB016B, located next to the Inala Private Reserve, in October 2015.
7. Will he take action to ensure that logging does not take place on Bruny Island, Tasmania.

Mr Hunt: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

1. The most recent available estimate of the wild population size was 2,500 in May 2015, as provided by the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment.
2. The population estimate has remained the same since 2011.
3. That is a matter for the Tasmanian Government.
4. That is a matter for the Tasmanian Government.
5. I am committed to the long term conservation of Australia's nationally threatened species, including the swift parrot. I have initiated research on management approaches to address swift parrot nesting issues to be developed with support from stakeholders and included as part of the portfolio of projects under the National Environmental Science Programme Threatened Species Recovery Hub.
6. The forest operations adjacent to the Inala Property on Bruny Island fall within the Tasmanian RFA area. As forestry operations in an area covered by an RFA are exempt from consideration under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, this is a matter for the Tasmanian Government.
7. Forestry operations conducted within coupes on Bruny Island fall within the area covered by the Tasmanian RFA, and are exempt from consideration under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. For this reason the logging of specific coupes is a matter for the Tasmanian Government.

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Staff Contracts

Question No. 856

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, in writing, on 17 August 2015:
In respect of recruitment, training and service contracts undertaken by the Minister's department(s) in 2014-15, (a) how many new staff contracts were entered into, and of these, what are the relevant staffing levels, and (b) what total sum was spent on recruitment, and of this, what is the breakdown for (i) recruitment agency fees, (ii) advertising, (iii) assessment processes, and (iv) other associated costs.

Mr Joyce: The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) How many new staff contracts were entered into (during 2014-15), and of these, what are the relevant staffing levels.

During 2014-15 there were:

- 636 new contracts entered into (i.e. new commencements, contracts/rehires, extensions and promotions from other agencies).
- 582 were at the APS level (including meat inspectors),
- 51 were at the Executive level
- 2 were at the Senior Executive level
- 1 was for the Secretary
- 366 were new commencements into the department
- 85 ongoing commencements
- 14 ongoing commencements as a result of a promotion into the department
- 113 casual commencements
- 38 of these were new contracts or employees being rehired by the department
- 24 Non-ongoing
- 14 Casual
- 232 were contract extensions
- 70 non-ongoing contract extensions
- 162 casual contract extensions

New Contracts - APS levels (including Meat Inspectors)

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<th>APS1</th>
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New Contracts – Executive Level and Senior Executive Level

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</table>

(b) What total sum was spent on recruitment, and of this, what is the breakdown for (i) recruitment agency fees, (ii) advertising, (iii) assessment processes, and (iv) other associated costs

It is not possible to provide a breakdown as the general ledger does not capture information in this format. It would be possible to do an interrogation of the transactions, however this will take a significant amount of time and is not a good use of departmental resources.

Department of Finance: Staff Contracts

(Question No. 866)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In respect of recruitment, training and service contracts undertaken by the Minister's department(s) in 2014-15, (a) how many new staff contracts were entered into, and of these, what are the relevant staffing levels, and (b) what total sum was spent on recruitment, and of this, what is the breakdown for (i) recruitment agency fees, (ii) advertising, (iii) assessment processes, and (iv) other associated costs

Mr Morrison: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) Nil. In respect of recruitment, staff are engaged under Section 22 of the Public Service Act 1999. Staff are not employed via service contracts.

(b) The total sum spent on recruitment for 2014-15 was $649,278.33. The breakdown is as follows:

(i) $282,677.44 for recruitment agency fees,

(ii) $47,506.40 for advertising. This includes $7,639.82 for advertising the ICT whole-of-government Entry Level programmes which the Department of Finance manages on behalf of participating agencies,

(iii) $66,155.91 for assessment processes, and

(iv) $252,938.58 for other associated costs. This includes career expo costs of $63,575.71 for the ICT whole-of-government Entry Level programmes which the Department of Finance manages on behalf of participating agencies.

Department of Finance: Casual Staff Contracts

(Question No. 884)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In respect of labour hire firms contracted by the Minister's department(s) in 2014-15, (a) how many positions were filled using casual staff from labour hire firms, (b) what sum was spent on the provision of these casual staff, and (c) what roles did these casual staff fulfil.
Mr Morrison: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:

Finance did not engage any casual staff through labour hire firms in 2014-15.

Department of Finance: Contracted Services Payments
(Question No. 902)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In respect of fees for late or delayed payment of contracted services or products by the Minister's department(s) in 2014-15, (a) which services or products do these fees relate to, and (b) what sum was spent.

Mr Morrison: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:

Late payment fees for 2014-15

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<tr>
<td>Contractor Services</td>
<td>$883.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Services</td>
<td>$486.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$3,003.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Department of Finance: Market Research
(Question No. 991)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for the Environment, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

What sum was spent by the Minister's Department(s) on market research and associated services in 2014-15, and what policy areas did this inform.

Mr Hunt: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

A total of $389,372.10 (GST inclusive) was spent on developmental market research and concept testing for the Green Army participants and projects recruitment campaign.

Department of Finance: Office Equipment
(Question No. 1028)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

What sum did the Minister's department spend in 2014-15 on the purchase and/or lease of (a) food and beverage equipment, and (b) exercise equipment, for staff in the (i) Minister's office, and (ii) departmental office(s).

Mr Morrison: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) No major food and beverage equipment was purchased by the department in 2014-15. Individual business groups may purchase small appliances i.e. toasters, kettles etc. For asset purposes, these items are considered low value and the department does not maintain a record of these appliances.

(b) (i) Nil
    (ii) Nil
Department of Finance: Legal Services and Credit Cards
(Question No. 1046)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

What sum did the Minister's department spend in 2014-15 on (a) legal services, and (b) credit cards.

Mr Morrison: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) In accordance with the Legal Services Directions 2005 the Department will publish its legal services expenditure for the 2014-15 year on its internet site (www.finance.gov.au) by 30 October 2015.
(b) 2014-15 full year credit card expenditure totalled $1,135,129.37.

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Mobiles Phones and Tablets
(Question No. 1054)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

(1) What sum did the Minister's department spend in 2014-15 on the purchase and/or lease of (a) mobile phones, and (b) tablet devices for (i) Ministerial staff, and (ii) departmental staff.

(2) What sum was spent on telecommunications contracts associated with these devices by (i) Ministerial staff, and (ii) departmental staff.

Mr Joyce: The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

The department does not lease mobile telephones or tablet devices.

(1) Over financial year 2014-15, the department spend for the purchase of:
   (a) (i) mobile phones for the use of Ministerial staff - $2,080.00;
       (ii) mobile phones for the use of departmental staff - $340,566.00;
   (b) (i) tablet devices for the use of Ministerial staff - $920.00; and
       (ii) tablet devices for use of department staff - $1,009,800.00.

(2) Over financial year 2014-15 the department spend on telecommunications contracts associated with these devices was:
   (i) Ministerial staff - $22,819.00, and
   (ii) department staff - $500,000.00.

Department of Finance: Mobile Phones and Tablets
(Question No. 1064)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

(1) What sum did the Minister's department spend in 2014-15 on the purchase and/or lease of (a) mobile phones, and (b) tablet devices for (i) Ministerial staff, and (ii) departmental staff.

(2) What sum was spent on telecommunications contracts associated with these devices by (i) Ministerial staff, and (ii) departmental staff.

Mr Morrison: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:
(1) (a) The sum spent on mobile phones in 2014-15 was:
   (i) $10,314 for Ministerial staff
   (ii) $139,792 for departmental staff
(b) The sum spent on tablet devices in 2014-15 was:
   (i) $3,996 for Ministerial staff
   (ii) $96,057 for departmental staff
(2) (i) $44,069.99
   (ii) $197,767.16

Department of Finance: Departmental Staff Redundancies
(Question No. 1134)
Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 17 August 2015:
In respect of departmental staff (a) how many redundancies were made in 2014-15, and (b) what is the total cost of payments associated with these redundancies.
Mr Morrison: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:
(a) Two
(b) $207,615.97.

Department of Finance: Departmental Staff Lost and Stolen Equipment
(Question No. 1186)
Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 17 August 2015:
In 2014-15, what sum was spent on replacing lost, stolen or misplaced equipment of departmental staff, and what goods were replaced.
Mr Morrison: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Total Qty</th>
<th>Total Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remote access tokens</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$345.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iPhone</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iPad</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBMS Tokens</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$36.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,080.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Department of Finance: Ministerial Staff Lost and Stolen Equipment
(Question No. 1217)
Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 17 August 2015:
In 2014-15, what sum was spent on replacing lost, stolen or misplaced equipment of Ministerial staff, and what goods were replaced.
Mr Morrison: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:
Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Departmental Staff Training
(Question No. 1280)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In 2014-15, (a) what sum was spent on training for departmental staff, (b) on what date(s), and at what location(s), did the training occur, and (c) what outcomes were achieved.

Mr Joyce: The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) Approximately $2.5 million in 2014-15 was spent on external training for departmental staff. A wide variety of in-house training was also provided.

(b) The Department conducts and provides a broad range of training for staff across the country on site and at supplier's premises including online, face-to-face courses or blended formats. These can be part, single or multi day courses delivered in a single block or through multiple sessions. Preparation of a detailed response would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

(c) The outcome of the training was to build the department's capability in a broad range of areas including but not limited to audit, information technology, work health and safety, leadership and management, writing, coaching, legal, human resources, training and assessment, and job-specific technical skills. Preparation of a detailed response would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

Department of Finance: Departmental Staff Training
(Question No. 1290)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In 2014-15, (a) what sum was spent on training for departmental staff; (b) on what date(s), and at what location(s), did the training occur; and (c) what outcomes were achieved.

Mr Morrison: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) The department's total expenditure for centrally administered training programmes in 2014-15 was $511,759.

(b) Training occurred on multiple dates throughout 2014-15. Training took place at various locations in Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

(c) The courses delivered in 2014-15 were targeted at developing capabilities and professional skills required by the Department of Finance to conduct its business effectively.

Department of the Environment: Departmental Media Events
(Question No. 1320)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for the Environment, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In 2014-15, (a) what sum was spent on training for Ministerial staff, (b) on what date(s), and at what location(s), did the training occur, and (c) what outcomes were achieved.

Mr Hunt: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
(a) In 2014-15, $976.96 was spent on training for Ministerial staff. This consisted of $526.96 for a MYOB onsite one-on-one training session and $450.00 for a staff member to attend the 2015 Future of Environmental Law Symposium.

(b) The training was held on Wednesday 23 July 2014 and Friday 6 March 2015. The MYOB training was onsite and the 2015 Future of Environmental Law Symposium was held in Sydney.

(c) The desired outcome of up skilling of Ministerial staff was achieved.

**Department of Finance: Ministerial Staff Training**

*(Question No. 1321)*

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In 2014-15, (a) what sum was spent on training for Ministerial staff, (b) on what date(s), and at what location(s), did the training occur, and (c) what outcomes were achieved

Mr Morrison: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:

For the Minister for Finance:

(a) Nil.

(b) and (c) N/A.

**Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Ministerial Media Events**

*(Question No. 1359)*

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In respect of ministerial costs for media events and photo opportunities in 2014-15, what (a) date was each event held, (b) location was each event held at, (c) sum was spent on each event, (d) announcement and/or issue did the event relate to, and (e) was the expenditure for.

Mr Joyce: The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources attends many stakeholder events, attends many meetings and takes part in many photo opportunities where media are also in attendance. Information is not kept about events, meetings and photo opportunities that are also attended by media.

**Department of Agriculture and Water Resources: Ministerial Conferences**

*(Question No. 1411)*

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

Did the Minister host any conferences in 2014-15; if so (a) on what date(s) did each conference occur, and at what location(s), (b) what total sum was spent on each conference, and of this, what sum was spent on (i) meals and accommodation, and what are the details, (ii) travel, and what are the details, and (iii) social events, and what are the details, (iv) travel, and what are the details, and (c) what outcomes were achieved at each conference.

Mr Joyce: The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

The Minister for Agriculture hosted one conference in 2014-15. Details are outlines below:
19 March 2015
Horticulture Industry Forum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Meals</th>
<th>Drinks</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Outcomes Achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parliament House, Canberra</td>
<td>$65.80 (morning/afternoon tea)</td>
<td>$329.25 (tea/coffee/water)</td>
<td>$395.05</td>
<td>Government and peak horticulture industry bodies engaged on the issues affecting the industry, including stakeholder priorities and the opportunities available to shape the future of the Australian horticulture industry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Department of Finance: Departmental Hospitality
(Question No. 1446)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In respect of catering and hospitality by the Minister's department in 2014-15, (a) what total sum was spent, (b) for what functions was the catering and hospitality, (c) on what date(s) did each function occur, and at what location(s), and (d) for each function, what sum was spent on (i) meals, (ii) drinks, (iii) hospitality staff, and (iv) other costs.

Mr Morrison: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:

2014-15 Hospitality Costs—Department of Finance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of event</th>
<th>Location of event</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Total Cost (GST inclusive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18, 19 and 21 August 2014</td>
<td>John Gorton Building, Parkes, ACT</td>
<td>GPFII Indonesian Budget Allocation study visit to Finance: working lunches during the visit+</td>
<td>$1,295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 November 2014</td>
<td>Tamarind Restaurant, London</td>
<td>Hosted dinner following conclusion of Europe leg of International Medibank Private IPO Roadshow</td>
<td>$1,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,556</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Cost recovered from DFAT

Department of Finance: Ministerial Hospitality
(Question No. 1477)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

In respect of catering and hospitality by the Minister in 2014-15, (a) what total sum was spent, (b) for what functions was the catering and hospitality, (c) on what date(s) did each function occur, and at what location(s), and (d) for each function, what sum was spent on (i) meals, (ii) drinks, (iii) hospitality staff, and (iv) other costs.
Mr Morrison: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:

For the Minister for Finance:

(a) Nil.

(b) to (d) N/A.